



SLOW DEATH FUNNIES 11 is out after a couple of years wait. This issue features the last of the late Greg Irons artwork. I know from the last conversations I had with Greg that he had become depressed and dissatisfied with his comic book work. He had started to learn the art of tattoo and the last year he spent in the U.S. he did a lot more tattoos than comic book stories. Like the majority of the underground cartoonists, he didn't see much of a future in what he was doing. His work was out there, but he made very little money from it. And, yes, he wanted success. He was never comfortable in the hippy artist role. Greg came to California in 1967 to be a musician and only got into art by coincidence. He did some rock posters and worked for Grunt Records for awhile, then did a lot of drawing when he met Tom Veitch. Greg was at his peak as a cartoonist when he was illustrating Veitch's stories. He was never all that interested in writing his own stories. Most of his own pieces are thinly-disguised biographical sketches and while Greg enjoyed drawing Gregor, he admitted to me that he didn't really know what he was going to do with him. He didn't really see himself doing a continuing strip about the monkey though some people were pushing him in that direction. The Gregor stories wander around various ideas, but they are never resolved. Greg wanted to be the best at what he did and I know he never really got over being rejected by the Zap gang at The Print Mint. Zap was the *Action Comics* of the underground and the guys who were in it were the avant-garde of their era. Anyone else wasn't quite there. This isn't true, of course, because there were a lot of great comic books in the period and most are too unique to be compared. But Greg felt that Zap was the top and for him to be anywhere else made him feel inferior. He wasn't alone. There were numerous artists who felt the same way. I know some fine cartoonists who were so overshadowed and intimidated by Crumb's reputation and style that they dropped out of cartooning and left the area.

And I remember the pride on Ron Turner's face the day he told me in his office that he had gotten control of ZAP. The way Ron was beaming said it all. Until that time, he always felt overshadowed by The Print Mint. I saw the same look on Bob Rita's face years before when he proudly stated that he was the publisher of ZAP. There is a

hierarchy in every endeavor. For writers, it's **THE NEW YORKER**, or **HARPER'S** or *The New York Times Review of Books*. For photographers, it was always **LIFE**. For underground cartoonists, it was ZAP and anything else was secondary. **YELLOW DOG**, for example, which began as a tabloid, was looked upon with contempt by nearly every cartoonist I talked to. Roger Brand used to say he hated YD and all those pissing dog jokes. It was a local cartoon market and lot of people, Irons included, went down to the Print Mint and sold stuff, but I can't think of anyone who ever had any pride in what they did for the title even after it shifted to comic book format. Greg certainly didn't. He had the same attitude of contempt for it as Brand.

All of this was around the end of the sixties. Things changed somewhat as Underground comix developed in the seventies. There were hundreds of titles in that decade and ZAP was only one of them. Still it retained the status of a Rolls Royce or of Bill Graham's Fillmore Auditorium in relation to other titles. There were some very nice issues of titles like **SNARF** and **BIJOU**, but in all the time I have been writing about the comix I have never heard someone ask, "Hey, seen the new *Snarf*?" ZAP came out about every two years and it was always an event in the local Bay Area underground. Now a new issue of **SLOW DEATH FUNNIES**, for instance, was an event around Last Gasp and I was around for the appearance of many of these comix, but a new **SLOW DEATH** was never comparable to the publication of a new ZAP. There was a peripheral reason for this that is seldom understood. The underground comix community was a closed clique in many ways and what happened therein was meaningful only to insiders. Max Scherr, who started the Berkeley **BARB** in 1965, loved Crumb's art and made it a practice of ripping it off and running it in his underground paper. Scherr would run a blown-up panel of a Crumb story as his cover and this type of publicity moved ZAP from the closed underground community into the wider hip community. Crumb and ZAP got out of the comix ghetto while most of the other comix and their underground creators did not. *Of all those who drew comix in the hippy days, those who became widely known were those whose work appeared in the underground papers as well as in the comic books.* Gilbert Shelton's **Freak Brothers** became known not through comic books, but through syndication in underground newspapers. The strip originated in Los Angeles in the **FREE PRESS** in 1968 and it was picked up by numerous papers in the Underground Press Syndicate. It stimulated McLeod at the *Georgia Straight* up in Vancouver to hire Rand Holmes to do *Harold Hedd* which was in turn passed around the syndicate and wound up in comic book form in the U.S. from Last Gasp. Bill Griffith's **ZIPPY** gained more attention in strip form than it did from the comic books and became one of the only strips to make the transition from underground to King Features. The neo-EC ecology oriented material in **SLOW DEATH** and **SKULL** was not reprinted in the weekly underground tabloids and did not share that wider audience. After the head shops were put out of business by changes in the drug laws in the early seventies, underground comix lost a

major outlet and there was a serious decline in readership for awhile. The comix were distributed by some of the newly developing comic book stores, but only in urban areas. Most of the rural comic shops were interested in straight, not hip comix, which is why the underground companies have to maintain mail order divisions. My standard for comparison has been Nebraska for many years because I would go there to visit my family annually. While I can go into several large comic book stores here in the Bay Area and find all of the latest underground comix, I went into a number of stores in Lincoln and found no underground comix at all. A dealer told me there just isn't enough money to be made on them to make it worthwhile, not to mention the legal problems. Makes no difference that there are now straight comix that feature sex, gore, and violence, often in a more blatant fashion than the undergrounds. The numerous busts of ZAP 4 [for Crumb's Joe Blow story] made the ugs a no-no for all but the bravest dealers.

No underground comic was blatantly pornographic in the way many of the current Eros titles are. Sex was satirical and often exaggerated to the point of absurdity in most undergrounds, particularly in the stories drawn by Crumb and S. Clay Wilson and Robert Williams [his Coochy Cooty stuff]. **YOUNG LUST** made a joke out of the lugubrious love comics published by Marvel and DC. All of the underground comix made it a point to attack the hypocrisy and moral prudery of the Establishment, to gross out the straights, the business cult, the nine-to-fivers, the hapless adults who had to work to make the money to pay for the excesses of their runaway kids who were hanging out smoking pot in Haight Ashbury or Tompkins Park or The Sunset.

The problem with the rebellion of young people that took place in the sixties was that the kids had no support group. In order to revolt, you have to create a new support group. Someone has to organize everything. People have to be fed. They have to have a place to live. They need medical and dental care. They have to have transportation. I used to laugh at the SDS revolutionaries and their pipe dreams. My question was always, then what? So the government is overthrown and capitalism goes into the trash can. Then what? How do people live in a smashed state? There was a group in Haight-Ashbury called the Diggers and they fed people in the afternoons down on the panhandle of Golden Gate park. The place was overrun with kids in the mid-sixties, say 1966-67, and none of them knew how to do anything. They had no skills. Just suburban kids used to having mommy make their dinner and wash their clothes, used to dad handing over a ten-spot for the movies at the mall. In Haight-Ashbury they were babes in the wood. The drug dealers and the pimps and the con artists had a ball with all this innocence. Young girls were given acid and passed around crash pads and often wound up with the clap and a pregnant belly to take back home to Mom and Dad in Illinois or North Dakota. Many of them wound up turning tricks on the street off in massage parlors owned by the mafia. David Smith was dealing with an epidemic of drug addiction by 1967 and

a lot of kids died because they did not know how much of this or that drug they could handle. Every hospital emergency room had to deal with nightly freak-outs and botched abortion attempts and accidents caused by people who were stoned and just didn't care what they did. It was all far out and groovy and what's yer sign, man? The food the Diggers were serving was stolen, not donated. Well, groovy, huh? As long as there is a company to steal it from, but had a revolution taken place, that company would no longer exist until someone with organizational know how set it up and got it functioning again. If you take over, you have to be ready to run things. Someone has to know how to run the BART trains. Someone has to know how to operate the complex traffic system at the airport. Ah, the revolutionary rap of the sixties was such adolescent horseshit. The government must have had a lot of fun playing games with the kids in the streets. The acid came from the CIA, after all. Lsd was a possible mind-control drug in need of testing and what better place to test it than Haight-Ashbury with its population of runaway kids?

Without acid, would there have been underground comix? Crumb says in one of his introductions in **THE COMPLETE CRUMB** that he took acid in 1965 and it had a major effect on his drawing and his outlook. Many other underground cartoonists used drugs. I don't remember ever seeing Roger Brand when he wasn't smoking grass or half way drunk. Larry Todd was a genius with marijuana and made no secret of his talents. He published his techniques in various issues of **DR. ATOMIC**, particularly in the fourth issue which was his Pipe and Dope book. Shelton and Dave Sheridan always worked stoned. Hell, grass to most of the underground cartoonists I knew was as much a ritual as ganga to the Rastafarians of Jamaica.

Heh! Heh! If you compare Crumb's pre-acid with his post-acid work, you'd always have to say that the CIA was the father of underground comix, huh? MK-ULTRA FUNNIES.

Well, no sense carrying this any further. I would say that psychedelic drugs were the fuel of underground comix and music and perhaps of a lot of the poetry of the period. As I made my rounds gathering material for my columns from 1966-77, roughly a decade in which I was an active photo-journalist, I seldom met any creative people who were not toking, rolling up, or in some way using psychedelics to enhance their creativity. The most common odor backstage or in the studio or in the theater or in the dressing room was marijuana. I was never much of a user, because I am a non-smoker. I would take a toke and pass the sacramental J along, but I seldom if ever smoked alone and I can't remember buying a lid of my own. People often gave me joints, because that was the going gesture of friendship. I had a joint one of the Cockettes gave me at the Palace for years. It was in a plastic bag with a baby rattle and some other stuff. The rattle was off a costume worn by one of the drag queen's in a midnight show. The strongest grass I ever had was Larry Todd's. I made the mistake of taking a couple of drags at a Bay. Con held at the Claremont Hotel and I was

totally wrecked the rest of the evening. I think John and Michele Wozniak drove me home to Indian Rock but I was at that state where I just glowed at everything. I heard what was said around me but didn't feel the need to reply or I just thought my reply in a microsecond and didn't know whether I had put it in words or not. So, underground comix were created in a haze of marijuana and since grass was still illegal and the government used it as a way of fighting and controlling the young there was always a slight paranoia wherever I went. Any stranger, after all, could be a narcotics agent [Norbert the Nark] and that included a FREEP columnist.

So if someone asks me if there would have been underground comix without the dope that fueled them, I have to say no and yes. No, the comix that exist today would not have existed, and yes, underground comix would have been but they would be very different in content.

Do I think smoking marijuana had anything to do with the death of Dave Sheridan? Yes, I do. Sheridan smoked regular cigarettes, but he smoked a lot of grass, too, and while a smoker exhales normally when smoking a regular cigarette, he tends to suck marijuana smoke deeper into the lungs and hold it there for maximum absorption and an enhanced high. Since the leaves of Marijuana have the same tars and toxins as those of tobacco, damage to the sensitive cells that coat the lungs is more serious. A lot of heavy pot smokers are dying of lung cancer these days and Dave was one of them. Hey, if you really need the artificial stimulation, make some brownies or add some marijuana to your spaghetti sauce.

To flash back to **SLOW DEATH 11**, it's time warp material, most of it dated about a decade ago. Greg Irons' cover is dated 1980. Warren Greenwood's story is from 1981, and the Wally Wood piece is from 1977. Tom Veitch's piece about Greg that opens the book is about a Greg he remembers, not the one I knew from 1978-82. Veitch paints Greg as someone who would never sell out and says he refused to participate in the Estren **HISTORY OF UNDERGROUND COMIX** back in 1974 unless he was paid so the "power brokers at Rolling Stone ached him out of the book." Along with S. Clay Wilson. Well, Tom, that isn't true at all. First of all, the book was produced by Straight Arrow Books which was run by Alan Rinzler and most of the work was done on it by John Goodchild. Straight Arrow was a division of Rolling Stone, but Jann Wenner had nothing to do with Estren's book. Wenner wasn't interested in comic art. He rejected it from the beginning because he thought it would make his music paper declassé. The book was Mark Estren's master's thesis and he originally sold it to Grove Press. Straight Arrow bought it from them and a great many of the artists whose art was used had already given their consent. S. Clay Wilson refused to participate? He has more art in the book than anyone else. See pages 65-67, 143, 145, 153, 217, 227, 239-40, 244, and 248. It was Greg's prerogative to refuse to participate, but at that point the book was a *fait accompli*; it was going to print one way or another, and in spite of the inadequacy of the text I think it helped

more than hindered the cartoonists who opted to have their art included.

The truth is Greg wanted to be successful, but it embarrassed him to promote himself. Well, you don't get success under capitalism without promoting yourself. Crumb always said he hated it, yet he's been interviewing himself for years and those interviews have run in some widely circulated magazines like **HIGH TIMES** making his name and his art notorious. I have a couple of dozen interviews he has done with various journalists over the years and I've personally seen him at two local signings and I know he has done many others elsewhere. Yes, he told me he hated it and felt like a fish in a bowl, but he knew he had to do it, that it was part of the business. Greg knew it, too, but he had a hard time with it. Around the time of his death he was promoting a line of t-shirts, going to comic conventions and selling drawings of Gregor, going to tattoo conventions and doing butterflies and rosebuds on women. He had started to become more social and to accept the commercial side of the art business as a necessary evil and I never felt his integrity was less because he took a more realistic attitude toward making a living with his talent. It's my feeling that the real reason Greg

didn't participate in the Estren book was because he didn't like a lot of the artwork he had, didn't feel it was quite where he wanted it to be, and didn't want it to be out there in a book representing him at his best. He felt he was improving all the time, but that he had a ways to go. He was the ultimate Libra never quite certain that he couldn't have done it better if he had only worked on it awhile longer. I know he sent in artwork many times that he was still unsatisfied with because he had a deadline and needed the money.

If it seems I'm putting Greg down here, I've failed to get across to you that Greg was a person to me, not some idealistic anti-establishment hippy artist. He came to my house for dinner and for parties. He stopped by the club where I work on his bicycle and I went to his place on Stannage a number of times. I photographed his t-shirts on a model and did some promo for him. We were on television together. I knew the woman Greg was living with and was sorry when they broke up, but not because I didn't understand why. I knew he was still after something that would make him feel like a success and settling down to have children with her wasn't what he wanted to do at that time. Greg had a family back east. He could have gone home. A lot of the people who ran away to Haight-Ashbury in the sixties had their fling with sex, drugs, and rock and roll, then just went back home and finished college and went into the business world somewhere. Greg couldn't do that. He was disappointed that he was over thirty and still hadn't made his mark, but he was still in the battle. He had his tattoo needles and he enjoyed working on skin, knowing he was doing art that would last the length of a life, and he went off to Thailand to check out the techniques of the tattoo masters there. He didn't make it back.

You can get **SLOW DEATH 11** by mail from Ron Turner, POB 410067, San Francisco 94141-0067. Ron wants \$5 and you get his latest catalog in the bargain.



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P. O. Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved. Artwork and material herein ©the artists or writers involved and used here for promotional purposes only. \$10 for the next twelve issues. \$45 for a complete set of back issues. Checks to Clay Geerdes. MO's or cash, fine.

REAL SCREAM COMICS, paradoxically "the serious funny animal comic," is still happening and the latest issue is \$3 pp from Mike Culpepper, 808 Stanley St., Nelson, BC, Canada V1L 1N7.

Clark Dissmeyer's latest is an illustrated story, **TRAVELING COMPANION**. 50*/STAMP from him. 2313 Central, #7, Kearney, NE 68847.

EL VIBORA 154 and **KISS KOMIX 14**. \$10 each pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Spanish erotica. Adults only.

CEREBUS 165 continues Dave Sim's Mothers and Daughters series.

Ace Backwards is still doing **TWISTED IMAGE**. Berkeley's own radical cartoonist. Check out a copy for a couple bucks. 1630 University Avenue, #26, Berkeley, CA 94703. Send him \$8 and get the **1993 Telegraph Avenue Street Calendar**.

Gary Usher will send you a copy of his **COMICS AND THEIR CREATORS** reprints for a couple of bucks. These appeared in *Literary Digest* back in the thirties and after. 205 Vine St., Glenwood, IA 51534. Fairly nice copy work. Each one is dated. Useful for the comic historian.

The latest **CITY LIMITS GAZETTE** profiles Mike Culpepper and Underground Station columnist Bruce Sweeney. \$15 a year from Steve Willis, POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

CEREBUS 164 continues Dave Sim's Mothers and Daughters series. Lots of letters in this one.

EL VIBORA 153 is \$10 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. A new Squeak the Mouse strip and a story by Gilbert Shelton about the Freak Brothers. **KISS COMICS 13** remains the best sex comic on the market. \$10. Adults only.

GOLDEN SHOWERS, ANYONE?

For \$35 bucks you can get **MAGIC POTTY BABY**, a little blonde baby doll who sits on her potty and pees as you watch. The pee vanishes in a little plastic potty because it is contained in the unit. No mess to clean up. Sounds a little perverted to me, but what do I know about toys these days.

GIRL JOCK 8 features a naked surfing woman on the cover. Sports from a feminine viewpoint. \$3.95 from POB 2533, Berkeley, CA 94702.

Terry Laban's **CUD 2** is out. In the spirit of the underground, a truly unrepressed book with a lot of freewheeling art and humor. In Berkeley, it's available at Comic Relief.

FURRY FREAK BROTHERS 25TH YEAR

Gilbert Shelton's Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers celebrate their 25th anniversary in 1993. Created in 1968 for the Los Angeles **FREE PRESS** when Shelton was living down by the canal in Venice, Phineas, Freewheelin' Franklin, and Fat Freddy, have changed little if any over the years. I used to stop by Rip Off Press when it was out on Missouri in San Francisco. It was a large rambling warehouse building. Inside the front door was a lobby of sorts and to the left was the office where Fred Todd sat at his cluttered desk. There were boxes of mail all over the place and Fred laughed and said they just looked through a box to find an uncanceled stamp once in awhile. No one was in a hurry to read all those fan letters and it is likely there were checks in some of those envelopes that went undiscovered for years. I was there a few days after Rip Off bought a Webb Press. They had decided to print their own comic books and control their whole scene. No more dealing with other printers. They would do the covers and the guts right there. That press was huge. Dominated the entire room. There were big rolls of paper and skids of printed covers sitting around the place. I think **GRIM WIT 1** was running the day I was there. Dave Moriarty was running the press.

Upstairs was the studio where the artists worked. Shelton and Sheridan were working on the Freak Brothers then. Paul Mavrides who worked on the latest issue [#12, out in December, 1992] was not around yet. Hell, he probably wasn't even in high school then. Shelton was working on a Freak Brothers page. Ruling in the panels. He used the old Sunday page layout familiar to those of us who grew up reading Mutt and Jeff. There was the major strip and a cat strip below. That started way back with Herriman when he started filling in the bottom with a Crazy Kat strip. His main strip was The Dingbats then. Go back and read some Mutt and Jeff pages and you'll see how influential the flow of those gag stories was on Shelton. Bud Fisher's cat was Cicero. If Shelton ever named Fat Freddy's cat, I don't remember it.

Shelton finished the panels and laid the page down. He got out the

makings and rolled up a joint. Passing a J around was routine. I never saw any other drugs there. Sheridan was working on the page with the VW bus careening around the mountain. After awhile, everyone took a break, cleared off the tennis table that doubled as a drawing surface, and played a few games of ping pong. People wandered in and out, talking a little business, looking at some of Shelton's reference books, glancing at the art and posters on the wall, gossiping about who was doing what, who had a page in what comic, who might get the next Crumb book, when Zap would get back from the printer. It was still published by Bob Rita at The Print Mint then. It's published by Ron Turner now.

I hung around awhile, got whatever comic books were new, checked on the progress of **THE RIP OFF REVIEW OF WESTERN CULTURE**. Made a few notes for CW. Took a few pictures. I always took pictures and nobody thought much about it at the time but it's because I was systematic that a photographic record of all the companies and artists exists today. If anyone ever does an exact history of underground comix and the scene around them, my early newsletters will be a primary source of data. I know some of the people didn't like the way they looked in some of the photos, but that's life. That's how they looked at the time. I'm not being unsympathetic. I feel the same about a lot of the photos taken of me in those days.

The guys at Rip Off Press, which was formed in 1969 by Todd, Shelton, Moriarty, Jaxon, a loose coalition of former University of Texas [Austin] students, decided to get rid of the Webb Press after a very short time because they found out how expensive it was to run. It did not pay to set up the press to run two or three comic books. You had to have a lot of other jobs and that meant going out and hustling work. Rip Off printed a few posters and ads and comic books, then sold the press and concentrated on production and distribution. Today, Kathe and Fred Todd run the business end of Rip Off Press from Auburn, California [POB 4686]. Their number is 800-TRY COMIX IF you want to call up.

THE NEW WAVE???

I needed to stay solvent. I owed three hundred thousand dollars a year in alimony and child-support payments. I had lost my house in Malibu, my apartment on Central Park West, and a large portion of my other assets in an expensive and bitter divorce a year earlier. I also had expenses on a modest (for Manhattan) penthouse apartment on Ninety-sixth Street and Madison Avenue. I had my parents to support, and a host of others to help out. And then there was my sailboat, the **New Wave**, a graceful forty-four-foot blue sloop with lots of ea-miles under her keel. She consumed about fifty thousand dollars a year—at the time, a passion I could not afford, and one I could not afford to lose.

Geraldo Rivera
EXPOSING MYSELF, 1991



Get a copy of Mike Stengl's new mag, **TESTy**, for a buck. POB 568, Trinidad, CA 95570.



SUPERMAN [1932-1992]

I just got a notice that Guernsey's in New York is going to auction off the artwork for the death of Superman. They sent stats of some of the panels, including the one shown here where the man of former steel is breathing his last in the arms of Lois Lane while good old ageless Jimmy Olsen snaps the picture. Lois is reassuring her longtime love that the medics are on the way and all will be well. Fat chance. Is there anyone who doesn't know the lore of Jerry Siegel's ego-ideal by now? All this crap about a character killing off Superman leaves me unmoved to the max, dear readers. Tell me, Lois, what could a human medic do for an extraterrestrial like Jor-El? Give him a shot of morphine to ease the pain? His skin is impermeable. So where did the blood come from on those super deltoids?

Just looking at this drawing is an experience. The comic book is the ultimate cheap shot with panels blown up to full-page size to pad out the emptiness of the story and hurry this piece of rot to the printer so the bucks could be rolled in before Christmas. The story of Superman's death was sent out to all the newspapers and they were happy to hype the product. If you look at this panel closely, you'll see a lot of anatomical errors. Superman's left hand seems to grow out of his forearm and his left nipple seems pushed off his chest and those knees, well, forget those knees. Lois Lane, one might remind the artist, is much smaller than Superman, yet her head and upper torso appear as large as his--why would I want to buy this drawing? In a previous panel, Doomsday slashed Superman's chin, yet his chin seems fine in this one. Continuity anyone? My point is that this is not a carefully drawn comic book, not well thought out artwork; this is a hustle more than likely born in DC's ad department to rip off the kid comic buyer. It's an inferior product priced high for a quick profit. It worked as well as the Batman hustle and a lot of shopkeepers, I am sure, have squirreled away a box or two for later sale at

inflated prices. I hope you guys eat those comics just like you did the **SHAZAM** 1's. Look for this loser in the quarter bin a year or two down the line. C.G.

Peggy Lee, royally ripped off by Disney in 1955 when she did the voice of Lady and co-wrote six of the songs in **THE LADY AND THE TRAMP**, was finally awarded damages after the Supreme Court turned down Disney's appeal. Lee was upset when Disney released the film on video and never ponied up any of the profits to her. Well, Lee is lucky. The majority of the people who worked for the major studios over the years have been royally fucked and most haven't been in any position to sue. The studios make megabucks on the creativity of those working in films and feel no more obligation to their employees than any other corporations. When the Andy Hardy films were released on video last year, did Mickey Rooney get any royalties? Not a dime. Ted Turner is now making more money off the MGM cartoons than any of the creators ever did. When they did their work years back, no one thought about television at all. Who would have suspected that the time would come when anyone and everyone could have a personal copy of any major film for a few dollars? Did the studios make any effort to contact the creators and actors and offer a reasonable royalty when this new medium came along as a megaprofit source? Hell, no. They kept it all. All the majors, including Disney, keep lawyers on staff and their major function is to keep the creative people from making a decent return on their work. If you want an insight into just how corrupt most of the Hollywood studios are, read **INDECENT EXPOSURE**. A fund should be set up by each studio and the profits from video or laserdisc or CD should be placed in this fund and those people who worked on the creative projects now being recycled in the new media should be able to apply for an appropriate percentage of that fund. Call it the Peggy Lee Fund. The average lay person labors under the misapprehension that all those people seen on television and in the movies are wealthy. No true at all. It takes a lot of cash to keep up in show business, usually a lot more than the stars make. A few become very rich, while the majority barely pay the monthly bills. Laurel and Hardy are known by everyone around the world and the newcomers know them from the videos of their comedies. Stan Laurel was living in a motel room when he died. Many stars have left their families in debt and in nearly every case one may point the finger at the studios. Agents run a close second as Debbie Reynolds and Kirk Douglas, along with numerous others, have noted in their biographies.

The latest from Maximum Traffic: **Random Entry Comix 3** and **Diary of Neo-Psychedelic Man 9** go for, oh, two bucks postpaid. POB 2452, Butler, PA 16003-2452. Keep on networkin'!

Yes, Dan O'Neill is still doing it. His strip appears most weeks in the San Francisco **BAY GUARDIAN**. In the strip named for himself, Dan is the main character, a guy who tells stories in a local bar to cadge drinks. If you're local pick up the free paper and check in the ad section near the back.

I have a very low hype threshold. I just looked at the latest copy of *Esquire* and it's all hype. Buy. Buy. Buy. I have a couple of the early *Esquires* in my mag collection and let me tell you they were arty mags with a lot of pictures and stories and interesting historical articles. *Esquire* was innovative for its time. It began publication in 1933 as a magazine for men. This may mean little to the modern reader, but up until that time magazines were generally thought of as women's turf. Since the mid-19th century, the days of *Godey's Lady's Book* and *American Magazine*, these pubs were aimed at housewives. It was assumed in the 1800's that men were the breadwinners and they were out working and didn't have time for anything as frivolous as a magazine. The lady of the house, on the other hand, had lots of time to waste, hence the ladies' mag tradition.

Esquire was quite successful and was followed by numerous other men's mags like *Stag* in 1937. Hugh Hefner's first choice for his new mag in 1953 was *Stag Party* but he finally decided on *Playboy* because of the similarity to *Stag*. The early *Esquires* were worth the money, but the latest copies suck. I don't want to look at all that advertising and when I look at the standardization that has taken place I realize that there is very little difference between *Esquire* and *Vanity Fair* and half a dozen other mags I could name. I know corporations must think saturation advertising makes the public love their product, but here is one person who hates seeing the ads all over the place and never buys most of the brands hyped. That goes double for the worthless crapola advertising on tv [and mtv].

*****GLOVE

Michael Jackson's cotton glove with 1200 hand sewn rhinestones was designed for his Motown 25 show in 1979 by Bill Whitten. Jackson had his first rhinoplasty the same year. The job was somewhat botched and his new nose was restructured by Dr. Steven Hoefflin in 1980.

Wonder Con 7 is set for April 2-4, 1993 at the Oakland Convention Center. For an update and information, write to **Bryan Uhlenbrock**, 2831-D Miller St., San Leandro, CA 94577, or call 510-352-5841. There will be a Pros only con March 31-April 1. Ask Bryan for details if you are an artist or writer.

MY GUINNESS!

The *Guinness Book of Records* was first published in 1955 after Sir Hugh Beavers of the Guinness Brewing Company asked a London 'fact and figure' agency to verify facts about such things as athletic records, geography, inventions, and discoveries--the kinds of things people argue about in pubs. The book was an immediate success and in 1974 it became the best-selling copyrighted book in publishing history. It is published in 35 languages.



CLAY GEERDES COMIX WAVE 133

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Ace Backwards has done the cover for John Hoffman's amazing book, **THE ART AND SCIENCE OF DUMPSTER DIVING**. Yes, this is a book about a guy who dives into dumpsters and lives off the many unusual things he finds discarded there. And the guy isn't even a dylan groupie like A. J. Weberman who used to go through bob dylan's garbage! I got a dumpster story for you that Hoffman never included or he may and I missed it. A few years back a doctor named William Douglas who worked out of Tufts University got himself involved with a prostitute in Boston and he wound up killing her and stashing her body in a dumpster. Well, they never found the body because by the time he confessed the deed, the dumpsters had long been emptied. So they could simply go and dig her out of the landfill, right? Wrong. A year had passed and when the state of Massachusetts computed the cost of going through all that garbage to find the body they decided it was an impossible task and dropped the idea. Douglas was convicted and sent to do his time. If anyone dove into that dumpster while his victim was decaying therein, the diver never mentioned it. \$16.95 PP from Loompanics Ltd., POB 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

If anyone tells you the rich didn't get richer under Reagan/Bush while the poor got bupkis, I suggest you turn them on to New York University Econ prof. Ed Wolff's recent study of American wealth. The richest 1/2 per cent saw their average wealth grow from 8.5 mil in 1983 to \$10.7 mil in 1989 (26%). Most of the wealth was due to capital gains. During this period, the indebtedness of American households increased from 15% of net worth to almost 19 per cent.

Don't miss Martin Emond's great artwork in **WHITE TRASH 1**. Kind of a parody of everything that typifies the American redneck shitkicker. Elements of **Easy Rider** and **The Blues Brothers** and all the road movies made by Burt Reynolds and Clint Eastwood. I found one at Comic Relief in Berkeley.

Clark Dissmeyer sent me a copy of an article by Sharon Waxman which appeared in The Washington **POST** [5/25/92]. It's a piece on Crumb's current lifestyle in the South of France. "The Man Whose Muse is Misery," talks about Crumb and his most recent work in **HUP**. Seems Crumb is keeping up with his music and playing in a band called *Les Primitifs de Futur* [Primitives of the Future] once in a while. Crumb told Waxman Toyota offered him a gig, but never wrote back when he suggested an ad showing his Demon Vulturesses being stuffed into a Toyota by Mr. Snoid.

Did Hitler really have nightmares about Al Goldstein? Did Peter Bagge really draw a comic strip about a secretary named **TRULI GODAWFUL**? Is perversity a privilege that belongs to the ruling class? All of these questions and more are answered in the first issue of **SCREW COMICS** from Eros, America's foremost purveyor of pornographic comic books. \$4 by mail [say you're over 21 and a bonafide adult] from Box 25070, Seattle, WA 98125-1970. And, yes, Al Goldstein still owes me \$25 for a photo he solicited for an issue of **SCREW** back in the early seventies when it was a New York tabloid. --C.G..

Television is electronic junk food, filling at the moment, but ultimately empty. a number of writers have argued that print is obsolete in hi-tech culture, but there are still readers around. After all, a programmer has to be literate in both human and machine language in order to enhance and perpetuate hi-tech culture. At the same time, literacy is becoming more exclusive, rarer. As the fees rise at colleges and universities, the less literate drop out and join the growing pool of service labor. For the future this means a wider and wider gap between the professions and those who maintain the lower level services necessary to civilization. C.G.

Typo of the Year Award

Michael [Jackson] needed a dazzling idea to promote the film. The unfolding of publicity to promote *Captain EO* is an excellent example of how a celebrity of Jackson's stature can manipulate the press if he surrounds himself with shrewd public relations experts.

J. Randy Taraborrelli
Michael Jackson:
The Magic and the Madness
Ballantine Books, p. 424.

The Origin of Medical Wealth

I have become impatient in recent years when I read of a sickness that seems to be infecting the young medical doctors of this nation. Before entering medical school, a would-be doctor marries a young nurse who will earn a small salary and support him till he gets started in his profession. Then, when the money starts rolling in and he finds himself at the center of his community's social life, he awakens to the fact that his wife is merely a country girl with no advanced education who does not do him justice in his new position. So he divorces her, shares none of his wealth with her, and replaces her with a younger and better-educated wife, with whom he can dominate the country club set.

James A. Michener
The Novel, 1991

Would you believe Garry Trudeau finally sold out and went commercial with t-shirts and buttons, etc? His catalog in the January **SPY** is no put on. I saw some of that stuff at Comic Relief in Berkeley. Can Watterson be far behind?

There is a hunger for art that reflects the real struggle and feelings of people. People's art is systematically discouraged or sanitized. Form becomes all-important while social content is diluted. Artists have to work for affluent people, the ones who buy their works or finance their foundation grants. So their options are often limited.

-Michael Parenti, 1992

I have a vivid memory of standing in a corner at a party and watching Andy Warhol watching everyone else. Warhol was kind of a cult leader, and a voyeur. I was fascinated by the way he saw the world, and the way the world let itself be seen by him. He was always near the center of the best parties, with Halston and Elizabeth Taylor and Liza Minelli, and he would just sit there and let the spectacle wash over him. He often provided the drugs and sometimes the settings, and these stars of the moment would perform. He was like a puppeteer, always two steps away from the main spotlight. Its always struck me as strange, in the years since, when people described Andy Warhol as being a part of that crowd, because he wasn't a part of it at all, at least not from where I sat. He was the ringmaster, never one of the circus clowns.

Geraldo Rivera
EXPOSING MYSELF, 1991.

EAT THIS COMIC AND DIE!

In case you thought a preoccupation with death was the exclusive province of underground companies who publish titles like **SLOW DEATH FUNNIES**, DC continues to explore the dark side in the Vertigo line, a group of comics distinguished by a gray, bleak, depressing look. **DEATH** is now a three issue mini-series and is personified not by the Grim Reaper but by a woman. This one is enlightened, but not lightened by the art of Chris Bachalo who I enjoyed during the current run of **SHADE THE INCREDIBLE CHANGING MAN**, a revival of Steve Ditko's enigmatic character. Peter Milligan did the writing for the new **Shade** and the range of material and ideas was impressive. I can't say the same for **ENIGMA**, a morose script about a lizard man who goes around sucking out people's brains. Yuk! If you wonder why death is getting such big play at DC these days, it's probably because it sells well to teenage readers who are notorious for having funeral fantasies and thinking about the various ways they might off themselves to teach the world and their unappreciative parents a lesson. Death has always been a cartoon staple. How many times has Willy Coyote died in Chuck Jones' Road Runner cartoons only to be resurrected a split second later? Death is good box office and the more killings the bigger the ticket sales. One of the top collectibles right now is **Punisher**, a clone of the **Exterminator**. Dracula's going through another cycle. Poor old bloodsucker. Makes you wonder why they never focus on the eating behavior of other characters, after all, the Count is just having dinner, folks. He can't help it if he's something of a cannibal. They would probably show you Superman eating, but he'd probably be drinking battery acid like that alien woman in **MY STEPMOTHER IS AN ALIEN** since he's from Krypton and his body density certainly couldn't assimilate the kind of protein needed to repair human cells. As for Batman, he probably eats insects like those entomologists who publish the *Food Insects Newsletter* at the University of Wisconsin. Wonder Woman is probably a vegan.

Life these days is made up of loops. Loops within loops. To be in the loop is to know all the latest gossip and manifest the correct attitude toward it along with the correct image. Not to do so is to be out of the loop and to be out of the loop is to be uncool, un-hip, and basically rejected and unwanted by all of those whose reality depends upon staying in the loop. The loops, of course, differ from class to class; image, attitude, and gossip are peculiar to social class and in our current social order the loops are manufactured and may often resemble nooses. The loop may be an economic noose around the victim's neck. But relax. If you're reading this, you're safely within the comic loop.

The writer never writes it the way you see it and the photo never shows you the way you think you look. The writer doesn't write about you. He may interview you, but what he writes is his experience of you and since that is not your experience of you, how could you recognize yourself in it? Make sense?

...I realized what it was that petrified these people, that froze their brains into gridlock. To acknowledge that an organized conspiracy had occurred was to recognize that it had been done for a purpose--to change government policy. Having told the world for so many years how wonderful we all were, here in the greatest country in the world, the media people were not willing to admit that our national leader could be removed in such brutal fashion in order to change government policy. That would put the lie to American democracy. That just could not be. Therefore, in their minds, the assassination had to be a random event, the work of a deranged loner.

Jim Garrison
On The Trail of the Assassins.
Warner Books, 1988, p. 148.

The Latest From Davey Jones' Locker

There's an organization in St. Petersburg, Florida, that calls itself Christians for Renewed Family Values. They sell a free Christian memorial and ash-scattering service. For a 'love offering' of \$50 to \$100 you can have the ashes of your loved one scattered in the 'warm' Gulf of Mexico from the good ship 'M. V. 23rd Psalm.' After this 'dignified service,' your family will be issued a memorial certificate indicating the date, latitude, and longitude of the scattering. Headings on the certificates include *Gone With The Wind*, *Cruising Into Forever*, *A Salty Farewell*, and *For Whom The Bell Buoy Tolls*. The brochure doesn't say, but I'll bet they take plastic. -C.G.

CARJACKING

The latest scam along the coast is called carjacking. What happens is some guy comes up to you in a parking lot or at an intersection, pokes a gun in your face, and takes not only your wallet, but your car keys. He then speeds off with your car, while you try to figure out what to do. You are seldom next to a pay phone even if the thief has left you the coins to put in it, and by the time you have called in your license number the thief has probably ditched your car and stolen a replacement. Sometimes, the thief just drives his own junker right into you, then when you get out to raise hell, you see a gun pointed at you. This happened in Berkeley the other day. The thief stole a red BMW after rearending it. Carjacks have taken place at all hours of the day and night and in many different locations. Car theft has been common around here for years and it might surprise you to know that it's not just the hot cars like the MR-5s, etc. that get stolen. Older model American cars are often stolen and driven to Mexico and some models of Dodge and Chevrolet and Ford seem to be favorites, probably because the parts are easy to get and the mechanics South of the border know how to fix these cars, while they are not up on the latest computerized Japanese models.

Uncle Clay's advice is keep your car locked when you are inside of it and leave it unlocked when you are not. Carjacking is a junkie trip and the guy who is looking for a little loose dope or some casual cash in the glove compartment doesn't care if your car is locked or not. He'll just smash the window and you'll pony up at least \$150

Latest **WE ARE THE WEIRD** features an obit for deceased Psycho Tony Perkins, dead of AIDS. Hell of an actor. My favorite is not the Norman Bates character, however. I prefer Perkins portrayal of a sex-crazed evangelist in **CRIMES OF PASSION**. Tony got to work out all of the kinks in his psyche in that one. The video has all of the outtakes restored and sometimes this is a plus, but not always. They let Pekinpah have his way with **PAT GARRETT AND BILLY THE KID** and the stuff he put back in was best left in the cutting bin. Get all the news about drive-in culture and pictures of almost-naked girls from Joe Bob Briggs' zine. \$3. for a sample. POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.

Martin Barker's study of the effect of EC comics on British readers and the Wertham campaign in general has been reprinted by the University of Mississippi Press. **A HAUNT OF FEARS: THE STRANGE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH HORROR COMICS CAMPAIGN** will sell for \$35 in hard cover and \$14.95 paper. Best add a couple of dollars to cover post and handling. I have read this study and found it accurate and quite well done. I recommend it to other comic historians. C. G.

these days to have it fixed. The car thief who wants your car probably has the same tools a mechanic has and can get in whether you lock the car or not. If you leave the car unlocked, the junkie will just get in and look around then leave to look for dope and money elsewhere. It goes without saying if you leave anything that looks valuable on your seat, you might as well leave the door open and kiss it goodbye. I work at a local club and one of the things I see quite often is people coming in and paying the cover, then going back to the parking lot to put their purse or wallet in the trunk or under the front seat. Well, if I can see it, so do the guys hanging out on the corner or in the pizza joint. People seem to think the thieves are as dumb as they are. If they were, they wouldn't survive on the street for a minute. Only certain car stereotypes are routinely stolen and I suspect people who have installation experience, because it is not easy to get a car stereo in or out. Takes a lot longer than your casual thief cares to hang around, particularly in a lighted lot. Today's electronics are built into the dash and very difficult to steal. Maybe that's why the entire car is stolen. Car Alarms are useless and only irritate people. Anyone who has one in their neighborhood would cheer the thief who stole the damned thing, not call the police to help out the owner. Dave Hurst, a spokesperson for State Farm Insurance said, "We have not seen any evidence that having such devices makes any impact on our experience with auto theft." Large insurance companies only offer anti-theft when required by law and this law is active in only 10 states.

So again, Uncle Clay says leave the car unlocked and take your chances. That smashed window will cost you a lot to replace and your deductible won't cover it. The glass may also damage your upholstery. Park in a guarded lot whenever possible. There may be signs talking about limited liability, but these mean nothing. You can always sue in Small Claims Court and take your chances.

Clay Geerdes' COMIX WAVE



MY FIRST TWENTY YEARS

Twenty years. A long time to continue anything. I started **Comix World** in October of 1973 when I was a different person and many of the underground cartoonists I had come to consider friends were still alive and excited about what they were doing. In 1973, many still thought the Age of Aquarius was real, that they were on a journey that would end in a unified country where the ideals expressed in the early days of American history would be realized. I won't go into what happened politically, but will focus on what happened in and to the comix world as we moved through the seventies and eighties and up to the present.

From the beginning my conception of Comix World was one of unity. I felt that those of us who collect, read, praise, analyze, criticize, and perpetuate comic books, along with those who draw, publish, and distribute them, constitute a comics community, an international subculture. Whatever our professions and however we may disagree politically, however diverse our social classes, we are united in our support for the world of comics and our appreciation for those who create them.

Just as the late Dave Sheridan always referred to comix as the "People's fine art," I have always considered **Comix World** a People's Almanac. I kept track of cartoonists the establishment ignored and, however critical I was, I always supported the form and anyone who chose to work in it. I was an advocate of comixology. I wanted to see the form taken seriously. I tried to get Phil Donahue and other talk show hosts to include people from the world of comic art and animation. I could never see that the most trivial observation by some ham actor was worth national attention while the comments of cartoonists were routinely ignored. Even today when characters have entered the hypestream, cartoon people get no satisfaction. Kill off Superman, send out press releases, and rake in the bucks from a generation who never saw the golden age of the character.

What do I mean by serious? I mean it is just as relevant to write an article or monograph about a character like Fritz the Cat as one about a character created by William Faulkner for an obscure

novel. A dissertation on the evolution of the superhero or the treatment of women in comic book fiction is just as valid historically and sociologically as the tons of print spent annually on obsolete British poetry and Jacobean drama. I think it is more important for people to study images that survive for years in the public psyche rather than eclectic subjects one never thinks of after college graduation. In graduate school, I wrote a dissertation on the minor novels of Thomas Hardy and since turning that tome in to my professor I haven't given Hardy much thought. I have yet to meet anyone outside the academy who has heard of any of those quaint novels. I can talk about Superman and Lois Lane with anyone and get a response, though most adults will say, well, I've seen the movies.

I sorted my newsletters the other night and came up with 370 to date. There were 237 issues of **Comix World** though the last one is numbered 238. I misnumbered. There was no 230. In the **Comix Wave** series I started in 1983, there are 133 right now, because I just pasted up 132 and there were two 83s. Dating the letters is tricky because I was not too organized years ago. I was always monthly but sometimes I did four or five in a single month. This is why I finally started numbering them with the year. I didn't want to be held to a strict schedule anymore than I wanted to use the same format all the time, but I was stuck with the 8 1/2 x 11" sheet because of the technology available. I did one 8 1/2 x 14" issue (#7, the one with Shelton's cat logo on it), but I didn't like the legal paper. I did several issues pasted up so they could be folded into mini-comics, but that was extra work and I got complaints from the anal compulsives about it so I gave in and settled down to my current 8 1/2 x 11 two sided format. I still get complaints from the three-hole binder people, but all I can say to them is to have them side bound like I do. Most readers probably toss them out so I am only talking to serious collectors and research people like myself here. I publish one issue a month now and will probably do 12 this year. For the collector who would like this information in one place, I offer a bound set of all the letters to date for \$50 plus postage, which will run about \$7 because it's heavy. I have not indexed the newsletters, but Gary Usher has, so if you are interested in the index, drop me a note and we'll see what kind of deal can be made. The index print-out probably weighs more than the bound set of back issues.

Why did I do the newsletter and why have I kept it up long past the point where most newsletters and fan/collector publications have bitten the dust? The first **Comix World** column appeared in Richard Kyle's **Graphic Story World** and I just sent him a column. It was his title, so he originated the name. There was no logo. The first logo drawn especially for CW was by Carl Spahn for a column that ran in John Bryan's 1972 paper, the San

Francisco **PHOENIX**. Kim Deitch drew the first one for the newsletter. My early columns about comix appeared in underground newspapers and fanzines, mainly in the Los Angeles **FREE PRESS** and in **GSW** which became **Wonder World**. A series of Underground comix reports which I did for the **FREEP** stimulated the creation of the CW newsletter. I was encouraged by the publishers of the comix who realized this would be free publicity for their product.

In the first CW I stated the policy I would follow and when I read it over today it's pretty solid. At the end of the 1960's, the hub of Bay Area underground comix activity was Gary Arlington's San Francisco Comic Book Store in the Mission district. Any Saturday afternoon you would find people like Kim Deitch, Robert Crumb, Spain, Larry Todd, Vaughn Bodé, Roger Brand, Joel Beck, and countless others wandering in and out. They passed along gossip about each other and their activities and talked about the latest books in progress, who was drawing what for what title and who was publishing the book and when it would be out. I might run into Bill Griffith and Jay Kinney and hear about the latest issue of **Young Lust**, their parody romance title. Roger Brand would tell me about his plan to do his own comic books, **Real Pulp** and **Tales of Sex and Death**. Someone might mention the latest issue of **Yellow Dog** and there would be a collective moan because YD, while a paying market, had a low rep among the cartoonists. If you couldn't get into **Zap** or one of the "good" books, you gave your stuff to YD. Brand and Greg Irons were forever telling me how they hated figuring out new ways for "that fucking dog to piss on the back cover." **Yellow Dog** began as a tabloid from Berkeley's Print Mint and was to be the West Coast answer to **Gothic Blimpworks**, the comic tab published in New York by **The East Village Other**, but it never made the grade.

Gary was an ex-Army supply sergeant, an amiable guy who had two full collections of EC comics. For him underground comix meant a revival of the best of the EC horror line that Fred Wertham and the industry comic book code of 1954 had put out of business. Gary printed his ad as a tabloid he called **Eric Fromm's Comics and Stories**. He published some horror titles like **Bogeyman** and **San Francisco Comic Book** and he wanted to publish others but never had enough money. It was Gary who came up with the titles for what became **Skull and Slow Death Funnies** when Ron Turner of the Berkeley Ecology Center decided to put out a comic book. There was a bit of rivalry between Ron and Gary, but they were friends. Ron borrowed some money from his dad and started what became **Last Gasp Eco-Funnies** in 1970 and after he got his ecology comic book into print he decided to do some more comic books. Before long he was in the business. Ron's motto was **Mind Candy for the Masses**. There were four companies in the Bay Area at that time, early 1970. Gary ran one of them. Don and Alice Schenkler and Bob and Peggy Rita ran **The Print Mint** in Berkeley. Their company grew out of a counter which sold posters in Moe Moscowitz' bookstore. The Texans, mainly Gilbert Shelton, Fred Todd, Jack Jackson [Jaxon], and Dave Moriarty started **Rip Off Press** in 1969, and Bill Bagley ran **Company & Sons** out of a warehouse in

CLAY GEERDES COMIX WAVE 134
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San Francisco. Last Gasp became a fifth viable underground comic book company, one destined to outlast the others. Arlington and Bagley dropped out early in the game, leaving three Bay Area Companies. There were companies in other parts of the U.S., mainly Krupp Comic Works in Wisconsin, Cloud Studios in New York and the Los Angeles Comic Book Company, but only Krupp survived to the nineties, the others are memories. I saw the comics produced by these companies, but had little personal contact with the people who ran them although I met them all at conventions over the years. I mention this because people outside the Bay Area have accused me of bias which I don't deny completely, but I feel I have covered all of the comix in the newsletter and offer the letters themselves as evidence. If I have not included in-depth biographical information on artists who live elsewhere it is because they have not answered my queries and chose not to be included in my columns. I have kept my correspondence files and know who has and has not communicated with me during the tenure of CW.

There was always a lot of shop talk at Gary's store. Most of the cartoonists were making very little money and few had anything good to say about the publishers when they were gossiping. This requires explanation. Life was not supposed to be about money in the hip community around the Bay Area in 1970. The idea was to find out what you like to do, to do your own thing, to stay high and get by, but in spite of all the hip jargon the money to pay the rent and buy the art supplies had to come from somewhere and that somewhere was usually one of the record or comic companies. Cartoonists I knew were making their living doing rock posters, ads, coloring books, spot illos, and comic books. While all the companies wanted anything Crumb drew, newcomers did not fare so well, particularly if they were not drawing within certain thematic parameters. The graphic territory was claimed quite early and doors that were open in 1970 were closed by 1972.

Reality for an artist is trying to meet deadlines and trying to get advances and royalties out of publishers. One of the things that made underground art possible in the Bay Area was the extended hip community and the low rents. A few people could rent an old Victorian house in Haight-Ashbury and live quite well on very little money. There were art and music and baking collectives or communes and an endless gaggle of therapies hyping this or that ism or ology. You could get rolled in the morning and go for a primal screaming session in the afternoon and still make the early set at the Fillmore Ballroom where you might score a free copy of the latest Wes Wilson or Greg Irons poster. Life was anything but expensive. It was \$2.50 to get into the Fillmore. Compare that with the \$18-35 dollar concerts of today. My rent when I lived in Haight-Ashbury was \$165 a month and my wife and I had the entire bottom floor of a beautiful Victorian house on Ashbury Street several doors up from what we called the *Dead* house because Jerry Garcia lived there. Actually, it was a commune and the rent was shared by who knows how many people. Whenever I walked down to the Haight there were half a dozen people

sitting with their feet hanging out of the upstairs windows. Bands like the Dead and the Jefferson Airplane had just begun to make some money and I remember one afternoon seeing Jack Cassidy drive up in front of the *Dead* house in a new red Mustang convertible with the top down. People hung out at the various coffeehouses or just stood around on the street in old clothes they got out of the second hand shops for next to nothing. The antique hustle had not started and you could buy old movie magazines for a dime. Such a short period. It wasn't long before everything was about money again. I saw my first underground comix at the Psychedelic Shop on Haight. Zap, Feds N' Heads, Joel Beck's "The Profit," and one of Rory Hayes' Bogeyman comix. The guy was hung up on EC horror. Liked to draw pictures of weird, threatening teddy bears. He worked at Gary Arlington's store and I'd stop by to say hi to him and Larry Rippee and Sharon Heavey. She was the woman who did the greeting cards and later went into erotic movies. Rory overdosed on something. He was about 36.

Gary Arlington befriended a lot of cartoonists who came to the Bay Area from New York. Kim Deitch stayed with him when he came out in 1969. Gary gave Rory and Simon Deitch jobs in his store and loaned money to people. When the artists didn't need money, they traded Gary artwork for EC comics. They could, of course, sell these to other comic stores in the area if the need arose, but many were collectors who would have to get pretty hungry before parting with a *Vault of Horror*.

I collected the undergrounds as they came out and added them to the collections of earlier comics I have. I was always interested in all of the comics and I used to get mail from strictly anti-Establishment underground neo-revolutionary hippies who rejected Marvel and DC comics as fascist propaganda and told me I should only write about undergrounds. I got mail from all kinds of people once I started advertising CW in Alan Light's *Buyer's Guide* and other zines. Didn't bother me. I still cherish my Smokey Stovers and Little Lulus and Human Torches and Plastic Mans and Jingle Jangles and Uncle Scrooges. I have a lot of great comic books and while I enjoy the Zaps and Freak Brothers and Snarfs and Skulls, I'm not going to give up the good stuff associated with my childhood in order to be comically correct. Nor am I going to negate the interesting comics that have come from the East Coast in the post-underground period. I enjoyed Berni Wrightson's Swamp Thing and Neal Adams' Deadman and Barry Smith's Conan and Steranko's Nick Fury as well as Kirby's Kamandi and Demon and these days I am enjoying the brilliant writing of Peter Milligan in the revival of Ditko's Shade.

It has yet to be noted in the comic histories how strong and pervasive the influence of the undergrounds was on everything that has happened in comic books since *Zap*. The undergrounds opened a door that had been closed since the Code of 1954. Underground writers and artists owned their own characters and the copyrights to their own books. They drew anything and everything that came into their heads and were never censored by editors or publishers. They had the kind of artistic freedom that had

been unknown in comics since the new trend of EC under Bill Gaines. When we held the first underground con in Berkeley in April of 1973, younger writers and artists like Jim Starlin, Mike Friedrich, Frank Brunner, and Steve Engelhart came to participate and it was that year that Friedrich began to think about a middle ground that would involve both over and underground artists. There were many Marvel and DC artists who envied the underground artists their artistic license as well as their control over their characters and it would not be long before the term alternative comics was making the rounds. When he formed StarReach, Mike Friedrich used the term ground-level comics. I worked with him on the first couple of issues of his newsletter in 1977, transcribing interviews with Steve Leialoha and P. Craig Russell. Friedrich went on to form an agency that works with artists and he continues to work with Wonder Con.

QUOTE. UNQUOTE.

HARPER'S, in case you're not a reader of that mag, loves to publish random weirdness in a section of *Readings*. Anything can appear there from memos and private letters to quotations from magazines. **HARPER'S** uses this section for humor and irony the way I do the various fragments I paste in *CW*, but not everyone can take a joke. Knopf editor Gordon Lish recently sued **Harper's** for publishing parts of a letter sent to prospective students of a writing class he teaches. Lish accused Harper's of making him sound "pretentious, if not bizarre," and a Federal court judge awarded him two grand. All of which proves you can often make more money suing a magazine than you can writing for it. If anyone would like to publish one of my letters for two g's, raise your checkbook now.

The second issue of Bruce Stengl's **RABBITBOY** is \$1/stamp from him, 633 King St., Apt. 13, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Check out Rick Geary's latest, **BLANCHE GOES TO NEW YORK**. At your local comic book store.

Guy Colwell, always the innovator, is having a showing of his latest paintings in a Rec Vee [recreational vehicle]. February 14, 15, and 16, 1993. Info: 916-885-6042. Guy refers to his work as Traditional Social Realism.

TOONTOWN OPENS IN DISNEYLAND

Toontown, the newest land to open within Disneyland in 20 years, opened Tuesday, January 27, 1993. It's a gigantic funhouse with a lot of irritating gags, but visually interesting.



There was a COMIX WORLD 230. Jay Kennedy sent me a xerox of it. Just goes to show, you can't trust memory. The reason all those back issues are so fucked up has to do with the evolution of the newsletter and my changing attitudes toward it. For awhile I did it monthly, then weekly when a lot of things were happening, then monthly again and I was always in a hurry because it was a chore to do when I was busy writing stories and articles to make my living. My attitude toward the whole thing zigzagged because of the kinds of experiences I had with artists and publishers. When I had a bummer with someone, I was not inclined to spend a lot of time giving them free promo in my letter. If I had a good time, I felt like devoting a whole issue to the pictures and incidents as I did with things like the Hooker's Ball and Street Fairs. My back issues reflect my different moods and I don't apologize for any of it; with me you know, with most public writers you don't. Over the years I have shared what it is like behind the scenes. Unless I was quoting someone or doing a rare interview, I was the voice you heard and all the opinions and contradictions were mine. I did not remain the same person during those years anymore than you did. I know a lot of you pretty well from years of correspondence and occasional meetings and I know you have been through your marriages and divorces, your children and their problems, your successes and failures in the art business; well, I have been through these, too, and this is what we share though most of it remains unspoken. The early voice of Comix World was that of a young idealist, an ex-teacher-cum-pop photographer/writer, a sometime cartoonist and convention promoter, someone with fingers in many different pies. The current voice is that of an older man who still collects comix, though selectively, one who does a lot more research and writing than participating, one who has seen many artist friends fail to make a living at their craft and far too many die much too young. That younger writer was often lonely, disappointed, broke, angry, and unsure of the future. He was frequently used and abused and when the phone rang it was someone wanting something, not offering help. The older writer has a thicker skin and, expecting nothing, is often surprised when something nice comes along.

I have argued often that my set of newsletters taken together are the only complete history of comix extant and I still make this claim. Most of the histories in print exclude any aspect of comic history the authors chose to ignore. In *Comix World*, you will find the history of Mr. Natural as well as the complete background on Superman, Popeye, Smokey Stover, and hundreds of other characters that have dominated the world of comix over the years. Only in *Comix World* will you find the links between the rich history of children's literature and the comic strip and book traditions that grew out of sources like the Fables of Aesop and the stories of Uncle Remus. My personal philosophy has always been inclusive, and I have never given into the groupthink pressures of cliques. In many of my early issues I wrote about



CLAY GEERDES COMIX WAVE 135

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overground as well as underground comix and I got letters from the underground clique calling me a traitor and saying that Marvel Comics were this and DC comics were that and I should only write about ZAP or SLOW DEATH or DIRTBALL. I paid no attention. I went to the San Diego Comic Convention and I talked about comix with everyone who was interested in the form. I had been going for several years before any underground people came. The publishers finally stopped being hippy operations and decided if they were going to survive they would have to have representation at the cons. Underground attendance at the cons increased after the Head shops were outlawed in the early seventies, but interest in undergrounds never grew very big. There are a number of reasons, but I think the major one was the assimilation of the sex and violence of the undergrounds into mainstream comix. After all, when the undergrounds defied the Code of 1954 and continued to appear and sell, Marvel and DC were watching and if you compare the overground comix of late seventies with the neo-ECs, it is pretty clear that Marvel, while rejecting most underground artists, very quickly picked up on the underground themes which were selling copies of *HEAVY METAL*.

While underground comix played to the hippy movement and New left radicalism a la SDS, the artists who drew them did not exist in a vacuum. They read and were influenced by

mainstream comix. Marvel was doing Robert E. Howard's *Conan* at the time and lots of underground artists were fascinated by the character and wanted to get in on it. Jack Jackson [Jaxon], who was art director for Chet Helms' Family Dog and who did a lot of art for SLOW DEATH and SKULL, submitted a Conan painting to Marvel. It was rejected. Spain Rodriguez did an underground Conan poster. He always thought Barry Smith's Conan was too neat, too clean, and he wanted to show a barbarian who really lived on the cutting edge of nature. Rand Holmes, who taught himself to draw by copying entire stories of Wally Wood when he was a teenager, was fascinated by the barbarian comix and would have drawn a story for Bob Sidebottom's BARBARIAN had he not been forced to return to Canada. Perhaps the best example of a link between underground and overground comix was the work of Kansas City artist/ animator Richard Corben. It was Jaxon who got him to contribute to SKULL and SLOW DEATH after seeing his Barbarian stories in FANTAGOR, Corben's own fanzine. Corben did a number of underground comix, including GRIM WIT, then his work was assimilated into the overground. It would be hard to find any underground artist who wasn't intellectually and artistically indebted to MAD magazine.

But in the early days of CW, I got letters telling me to ignore Marvel and the other overground companies and to concentrate on underground comix only. When I started writing about Newwave and minicomix, I got the same kind of letters. I should ignore the new wave of underground-influenced cartoonists and only write about the old masters like Wilson and Spain and Crumb. If I had paid attention to all the advice I received, CW would have lasted a few months and gone the way of hundreds of other small press zines. But I was never the fan kowtowing to this or that. To me, comic art has a continuity going from primitive cave drawings through Egyptian hieroglyphics to the multitude of forms currently on the shelves of comic book stores around the world. I think the state of comic art has advanced incredibly since the appearance of the earliest underground comic books in the sixties. Mike Ploog's illustrated comic book version of L. Frank Baum's THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF SANTA CLAUS [Tundra, 1992] is a masterpiece, and the TOM SAWYER he did for the new Classics series ranks with it. I am always amazed at the expertise of the Spanish artists whose work I see in *El Vibora* and *Kiss*. That there are many nice editions of comic art books in the 1990s is a reflection of the confidence publishers now have in the viability of a medium which was considered trash in the 1930's when the first comic strip reprints were run by Max Gaines. --Clay 2/20/93

The latest **WE ARE THE WEIRD** letter from Joe Bob Briggs has a scintillating review of Madonna's cast iron **SEX** book, the one I'm sure no comic book fan bought because it won't fit in a plastic bag and stand neatly in a comic book box. \$3 from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.



HARVEY KURTZMAN [1924-1993]

There is always a person who finds a new path and has nerve enough to explore it, to lead the way; Harvey Kurtzman was one. He looked around him in the early 1950s and cast a cynical eye on the rampant conformism that was turning Americans into what William Lederer called "a nation of sheep." Kurtzman knew that beneath all those neatly pressed suits were men trapped and discontented, organizational men who had lost touch with the child within, a lonely generation inwardly mad. It was this feeling coupled with a love for great comic strip artists like McCay, McManus, Segar, Capp, and Kelly that gave birth to the idea which became *MAD* in 1952. Kurtzman, a New Yorker from birth, a graduate of Cooper Union, knew there were a lot of people walking the streets of Manhattan who longed to escape from the daily grind and he gave it to them in what is probably the most influential comic book in the history of the medium. Looking through the first 24 issues of *MAD* is like taking a trip through the cartoon and comic character hall of fame and for that one couldn't find a more inventive and congenial leader than Harvey Kurtzman.

A man who is not listed in the World almanac as a significant cartoonist.

A man whose death on February 21, 1993, was not front page news, whose life was not reviewed in detail on Entertainment Tonight.

If there is anyone more influential in the history of underground and newave comix, I would like to know who it is. When I was organizing Underground '76, there was one person who was top priority as guest of honor, one man named by the artists I asked as the person they would like to see at the convention. That was Harvey Kurtzman. Roger Brand and Joel Beck spoke of him with reverence. He had published some of the earliest work of Robert Crumb and Gilbert Shelton in his *HELPI* magazine in the early sixties. He had gone from *MAD* to *HUMBUG!* to *TRUMPI* and finally to create the most expensive and elaborate parody strip in the history of the medium, *Little Annie Fanny*. He had lectured and taught in the School of Visual Arts and when I contacted him about coming to Berkeley for our small convention he said fine, make me a reservation.

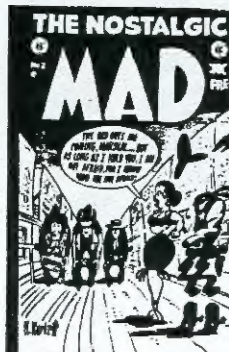
Though it was a lot of hard behind-the-scenes work at the time, I have a lot of good memories of that convention. Kurtzman was helpful and supportive and made himself available for anything we wanted to do. A group of us gave him a tour of Telegraph Avenue and told him stories about the Free Speech Movement and some of the more exciting moments in Berkeley's radical history. We had a lunch party at the Heidelberg. I told Kurtzman he ought to go to the San Diego Convention, that it was becoming the major American convention since the decline of Phil Seuling's annual New York Con. I told Shel Dorf

and the San Diego Convention Committee that Kurtzman was friendly to coming down and the visit came together by the Summer of 1977. I looked at a lot of the pictures from those two conventions last night. There is Kurtzman talking to Aline Crumb on Telegraph. Joking with Joyce Farmer and Lyn Chevli at lunch. Listening to Jack Katz talk about the latest issue of his *First Kingdom*. Waiting for a stoned Gilbert Shelton to answer a question on a panel. Signing some *MAD* books for a few kids in their forties. Posing with Sergio Aragones and me. I was wearing the t-shirt Joel Milke screened with Kurtzman's Annie Fanny logo on it. The logo ran on *COMIX WORLD* 25. There is Kurtzman shaking hands with Glenn Bray who had just completed an Index of Kurtzman's work.

So long ago now. Doesn't seem like more than yesterday. What remains for me is the memory of a man who loved comic art and believed in it as a means of expression and social commentary, one who encouraged others, and certainly one without whom underground and newave comix would have been very different than they are today. Without his support and that of others to whom he mentioned and recommended my newsletter, I might have quit long ago. I suspect there are others who might say the same.

My favorite memory of Kurtzman was the afternoon when he was sitting at a table with his daughter, Nellie [Cornelia], and they were both drawing. He was watching her with a loving smile on his face and I knew he was happy at that moment, that she was linked to him through the art and would carry on what he began. Nellie is grown now and I don't know where she is or what she is doing, but if she is listening she should know that there are a great many people out here in the comics community who loved and cherished her father and feel that their lives were greatly enhanced from having known him.

-Clay Geerdes 2/28/93



Your ideas are the strength of your work. There are lots of people who can scribble a picture, but it is your insight into people that will set you apart.

Harvey Kurtzman

Our Lady of the Dildos Meets Peter Pan

There were several references to Madonna on **Bob** [Newhart] the other night and the guy who works with Bob on the *Mad Dog* comic strip told him at one point "She ought to get down on her knees and thank you." I love subtleties like that in sitcoms. TV just gets more blasé. I watched Michael Jackson giggle and titter his way through one of the most self-indulgent and embarrassing interviews yet to disgrace a major channel. Why Jackson would want to display his ignorance for a hour and a half on prime time is curious. I can understand him wanting to show off all his toys and trophies, but the guy has become such a braggart in his middle years. He's 34 years old and acts like he's eight. He never gives anyone any credit but himself. You'd think he could put on a show all alone and the truth is his hi-tech performances and videos are orchestrated by hundreds of technicians. Well, hey, Mike, catch this. I don't give a damn whether you're a virgin or not and if you want to pay a plastic surgeon to make you look like an android, that's your problem, but when you take up an hour and a half of prime time you should either stick to a song and dance routine or get an education so you'll have something worth saying. Money may get flacks to yes you in the business, but a king you're not. -C.G.

Kitchen Sink has taken over as publisher of Larry Welz' **Cherry Poptart** and will reprint many of the issues as well as a new collection [Volume 3]. Like the *Ninja Turtles*, **Cherry** is another of those parodies that developed a life of its own. **Cherry** is Betty the way she might have been if she had lived up to the fantasies of all the stadium fanboys in Riverdale.

Chris Bachalo will be signing at Comics & Comix in Berkeley on Saturday, March 27. 4-6 PM. Info. 510-644-8377. Bachalo has done the art on the latest run of **Shade** and is now working on the three issue **DEATH** series for DC. I'm following DC's new comics noir trip.

THE GET-A-LIFES

By Michael R. Neno



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COMIX NETWORKERS

If you're looking for some European contacts into comix, you might write to some of the following guys, most of whom have zines to trade.

Tommy Hozager Olesen
Marius Holst Gade 6, 4th
DK-8700 Horsens
Denmark

F. Vieira
Apartado 454
8500 Portimao
Portugal

Florian Engel
Natruper Strasse 151
4500 Osnabrück
Germany

Sortez La Chienne
c/o Johnny Roething
48 Rue Leon Gambetta
5900 Lille
France

Marcel Ruizters
P. Jacobsstraat 6
6133 AM Sittard
Holland

Ingemar Bengtsson
PI 665
430 64 Hallingsjö
Sweden

If you were listed in the 1982 edition of THE UNDERGROUND AND NEWAVE COMIX PRICE GUIDE, I'd love to get a current address for you. This is also your chance to correct any inaccuracies or omissions in the listings of your work. Write and tell me about my mistakes.

Even if you weren't listed in the 1982 edition, I am interested in hearing your suggestions on how to improve the UG PRICE GUIDE and in learning of any mistakes you've spotted.

Or maybe you just collected underground comix and would like to be put on my mailing list for updates on the project's progress. That's fine. Send your name and address (and a wantlist too, if you have one) to this address:

Jay Kennedy
P. O. Box 1190
Canal Street Station
New York, NY 10013-1190

By 1967, the "beatniks" had been given a new name--hippies--and their cultural withdrawal was evolving into a form of politics. Clashes with police during the Summer of Love in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district and the Sunset Strip of Los Angeles, the organizing of "be-ins" around the country, the appearance of scores of "underground" papers, and the success of *Rolling Stone* magazine gave a rebellious identity to the new youth culture.

Tom Hayden. *Reunion*. 1988.

I could no more be a hippie in 1967 than I could be a beatnik in the fifties. I loved the music of the times, but strictly as a background to my life. I went to a few concerts, owned hardly any albums, rarely danced, and was privately frightened by the loss of control that drug advocates celebrated. On one of the few occasions when I tried marijuana, I found myself on the floor laughing hysterically during a supposedly serious meeting; another time, I became very angry at having lost all train of thought in the midst of an important conversation. All during the "cultural revolution" I remained the straight man, chastised by the Yippies for being dangerously uptight, power-driven, even--organizational! Still, I defended the cultural revolution" as a response of my generation to our parents' world, and I saw the Yippies as challenging bourgeois values. Unfortunately I was not critical enough of the so-called new values they offered and often let myself become an ally of absurdity masquerading as revolutionary politics.

Tom Hayden. *Reunion*. 1988.

EL VIBORA 155 and **KISS COMIX 15** are \$10 each pp from J. M. Berenguer. Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Erotica. Adults only.

COMIX FLUGOLA

THE GET-A-LIFES #1 is \$1.25 pp from Michael R. Neno, POB 151303, Columbus, OH 43215. Mike's **DZ DISCOURSE** is \$3.75 pp and the 4th issue contains a nice article about Peter Bagge's **HATE**, a comic book I have followed with a lot of affection since it spun off from **NEAT STUFF**. Mike will send you his recent catalog with an order. -C.G.

DARK ART 1 is a 60+ minicomic from Frank G. Lloyd, Jr. POB 248, Richwood, WV 26261-0348. Monster art.

Dave Sim's **CEREBUS 167** continues his Mothers and Daughters series.

FARMBOY FUNNIES 5 is 50¢/stamp from Rich Prosch 305 Pinehaven #44 Laurens, SC 29360

CEREBUS 166 continues Dave Sim's Mothers and Daughters sequence.

Dear Clay--

I really enjoyed your newsletter on your first 20 years! I just sat back and pictured those days. I remembered too all the *head* shops here in town and seeing those 50¢ underground comic books. Also the dirty run down comic book stores in Cleveland! They were always in small old buildings and back then you were lucky to find a few D.C's and Marvels--now that's all you see! And those comic book stores are too clean, too modern, and too *business* like. I loved the *antique* look of the old days. So when you were describing yourself and Fred Todd and all the others in that old warehouse, well, I could picture myself there with you guys. It seems like that time came and went so quickly. We all took it for granted, I guess.

Bob Vojtko
2/15/93

The Summer of Hate

Peter Bagge and Dan Clowes will be touring this Spring and Summer. Check your local throwaway papers for ads and locations.

Dear Clay--

Whatever happened to the days when kids read comic books for fun? Bob [Vojtko] had a box of comic books we tried to give to some neighborhood kids. Would you believe they didn't want them because they weren't valuable? Well, that's my commentary on the world of comics.

Sue Vojtko
2/15/93

FIGHT MAIL FRAUD!

Has your granny at the condo won \$10 million bucks again? Computerized mail fraud is okay these days. It preys on older people who do not see too well and are a bit slow in picking up on a scam to sell magazine subscriptions to people who never stop watching soap operas and game shows long enough to read. We got one of these bullshit mailers recently and I took it back to the post office to refuse it and found I couldn't even refuse it. I would have to pony up the postage to send it back to some box number in Florida. It's mail fraud and the people behind it are thieves and liars. My advice if you get one of these is to write MAIL FRAUD on it with a magic marker and pin it to the bulletin board nearest the post office.

Harvey Pekar was scheduled to appear on the David Letterman show, March 5, 1993, to plug his newest *American Splendor*, and Letterman announced him at the beginning of the show, but no Pekar! So what happened behind the scenes, Dave? Whoopi Goldberg interviewed Charles Schulz on her talk show in February of '93. Can it be that talk show hosts are discovering that cartoonists are interesting, articulate people, that they have as much to say as overpaid actors and made-by-tv celebrities? Pekar is from Cleveland, Ohio. What it is about Cleveland? Celebrities as diverse as Superman and Dealer McDope originated there. Of course, so did Mickey Cohen and Warren Gamaliel Harding, one of the first presidents to disgrace the White House. One of Harding's cronies used to sell bootleg liquor out of a briefcase. He went door to door in the White House. Need any scotch today, senator?

Ah, y'know, the Prohibition Act that went into law in 1920 changed the history of America. It created both J. Edgar Hoover and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Hoover pretended to be fighting bootleggers while he was controlled by Meyer Lansky, one of the majors, and Joseph Kennedy made his fortune selling bootleg, the fortune that enabled him to buy the presidency for his son in 1960. When Prohibition was repealed in 1933 and the country went wet again, the law establishment that had come into being to fight the bootleggers [or pretend to] had to find a new justification for its existence, so hello cocaine and heroin! Booze was used to control the working people, the *underclass*, in the early days of the American empire, and it still works that way, but drugs have come into their own as a clandestine method for funding all kinds of quasi-legal projects. If you're curious about how it works these days, see Sally Denton's *THE BLUEGRASS CONSPIRACY* [New York: Avon, 1990], and don't miss Anthony Summers new book on the corruption of J. Edgar Hoover. We know the game has changed a bit, because Gary Hart jumped ship after a picture of him with a party woman on his lap appeared on the front page of the *National Enquirer*, while Bill Clinton ignored a detailed account of one of his sexual affairs in *Penthouse* and went on into the oval office. Racism elected George Bush in '88, but from the constituency of the new administration it doesn't look like racism could get anyone elected dog catcher in '96.

Please note that the obituaries in CW are written for people I knew as friends, that each one is a personal memoir of my relationship with the person and not intended to be a comprehensive catalog of achievements and awards. I make no pretense of objectivity. Good, bad, or indifferent, my news letters reflect however I think at the time they are written. I seldom write about anything that doesn't interest me. I haven't had to do that since my college days. -C.G.

SISTER CITY

Berkeley was named for Bishop George Berkeley. I won't bore you with his history, but it doesn't bother me to live in a town named for him. I grew up in a town named for Abraham Lincoln and that didn't bother me either. Unless you are around for the beginnings of things, you are unlikely to have anything named after you. Guess what I think of the idea of naming Berkeley Sister City? This idea appeared under the byline of a UC student calling herself Beatrix Free X as an editorial in *The Daily Californian*. X referred to Berkeley as a "proudly acknowledged center in the Western United States of true global feminist and lesbian political power."

In her daydreams. What a sexist. In general Berkeley approves of gay rights and doesn't believe in discrimination against anyone, but the town is a long way from being any center of global lesbian power. I'm always amazed at what is projected and said for and about Berkeley, a city where I have lived since 1970, one which is currently as polyglot a place as you're likely to find. There are very large groups of Chinese, Japanese, African-American, Vietnamese, Thailandese, East Indian, as well as Irish and English and German Americans congregating here

and very few are lesbians. 34% of UC's recent class was Asian. If you walk around town, you will see many more Asian and black and Arabic people walking the streets, working in the shops, and, indeed, managing the smaller minimarts and diners and import shops than caucasians. Very few of these people are lesbians either.

Sister City. Give me a break. Now Brother City; hey, that has kind of a ring to it... C.G.

The range of subject matter in comic books continues to broaden and if enough young artists and writers recognize the great potential of the comic book and devote themselves, the medium will receive the recognition it deserves as a first-rate art form.

Harvey Pekar
Comics Are Serious Stuff
Cleveland Free Times, Feb. 10, 1993.

Crumbofiles take note. Bob Levin solves the mystery of the missing ZAP art in *The Search for Zap #0* in *The Comics Journal* 156. This is a nice piece about the way rumor is strong and longer lasting than mundane truth.

I have to comment about this lost art piece. Nothing new, just a reminder. **Always send stats when you're submitting your work to a publisher.** Never send your original art anywhere. If you do, it's your problem, not the publisher's. I used to see artwork sitting in packing boxes on the floor at Last Gasp and Rip Off Press and I knew it had been there for quite awhile. Since the publishers had not asked for that art, they had no responsibility for it and took none. If there was no return postage and packaging included, that artwork was where it would remain, often forever. Newcomers to the game are always naive about how things work. Why should a publisher pay your expenses? Why should he care about you one way or another? Publishing comics is a business and it is no more altruistic than any other. If something comes in the mail and a publisher thinks he can sell it and make some money from it, he will. But comics are always a gamble. Just because I think Mr. Snufflebox is funnier than a fart in church doesn't mean anyone else will. A lot of comix have been published during my tenure here at CW that never sold copy one! Sorry about that. Can't make the public buy what it doesn't get off on. You tell me why shows I like never seem to make it into second season on the tube. So the message is simple: if you're sitting there drawing the great American comic book and you think you're the next Crumb, go with it, but send stats to potential publishers and keep your original art safe from coffee stains and cat shit and angry lovers who may decide to rip it up when the course of true love fails to run smoothly.

The latest *CITY LIMITS GAZETTE* profiles Dennis Pimple and mentions Bob Moulton's Bizarro Bibliography. Yes, I did like the Bizarro issues of Superman. What amazed me was the patience of the guys who had to ink all those multifaceted characters. How about a hand for them? CLG is 15 bucks a year and you can count on Steve Willis to meet his deadline. POB 390, McCreary, WA 98557-0390.



CLAY GEERDES COMIX WAVE 137

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George Metzger, Pat Ryan, David Sheridan, Bobby London, Gary Hallgren, Larry Todd, and numerous other cartoonists were doing their own versions of the subculture in the early seventies. Holmes is extremely versatile and his funny animal work in **FOG CITY** is the equal of any major cartoonist. His most recent work has appeared in the **GRATEFUL DEAD** comics published by Denis Kitchen.

If you want to know about cartooning, ask a cartoonist. If you want to know about history, you have to ask an historian. The cartoonist knows about his own work, but the historian keeps better records. In the early issues of my **COMIX WORLD NEWSLETTER**, I often took the cartoonists for granted. I assumed they knew the facts and I wrote them down as they were told to me. But not for long. I soon learned I had to check everything or look like a fool in print. I met artists like Roger Brand and Kim and Simon Deitch who were collectors and had a strong sense of history, but I met others like Greg Irons who did not. All had selective interests and few were interested in the entire spectrum of comic art. -CLAY GEERDES 4/8/93

COMIX STARS ON PARADE

The major comic companies have adopted the techniques of the movie studios these days. They cultivate and develop comixstar artists to the point of making them cultic. This system recently backfired when a number of artists left the majors and formed their own company, taking their fans with them. When Todd McFarlane was signing **SPAWNS** at Wonder Con, fans had to take a number and wait in a line longer than that for Disneyland's Matterhorn. The wait was well over an hour for one autograph on the cover of one book. A costumed Spawn strolled around the dealer's room and posed next to the Spawnmobile parked next to the line.

The latest from Steve Lafler, **PROMETHEUS' GIFT** on the inside cover of which you can read all about one of Steve's mushroom trips. \$3.50 pp from Box 576, Hudson, MA 01749. **BUZZARD 7** is \$4.50 pp. Same address. A new Dog boy story. Steve will publish a collection of Bob Crabb's stuff later this year. Look for **CRABBS**.

Cerebus 168 continues Dave Sim's *Mothers and Daughters* series. Nice jam by Sim and Brad Foster on the inside back cover. The drawing is being sold to benefit the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

CITY LIMITS GAZETTE continues to plug a lot of small press stuff. \$15 a year from Steve Willis, POB 390. McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Bill Griffith was interviewed by Gary Groth in *The Comics Journal* 157 and the creator of Zippy was as opinionated as usual. Bill's memory is no better than anyone else's, however, and, in the interest of historical accuracy, Groth should have had someone check his facts before printing the piece. Bill's recall of the history of The Print Mint is quite shaky. Don [not Al] Schenkor and Alice Schenkor went into the poster business at a counter inside Moe's Bookstore and it was Alice, with her expertise in importing European prints and posters to sell to students, who was responsible for the survival of the business as it is today. While Bob and Peggy Rita worked with the Schenkors in the printing operation, it was Peggy Rita who did most of the bookkeeping. A lot of the books Griffith attributes to The Print Mint were published by other companies and only distributed by PM.

Middle Class Fantasies was Jerry Lane's graduate thesis at Fresno State College and when he came to the Bay Area he knew Ron Turner as an alumnus of FSC so he looked him up. Ron told him that Griffith and Kim Deitch needed another book for their initial run at the Cartoonists Co-op Press, so Jerry took it there. The second issue was not published by the Print Mint. Keith Green did it himself in October of 1976. The first edition has no logo or price on the cover. During this time the extant underground companies traded cases of comix and sold one another's books. **Short Order Comix 1** was published by Head Press in Aspen, Colorado in 1973, not by The Print Mint. #2 was published in New York by a shortlived outfit called Family Fun.

Denis Kitchen did **Mom's Homemade Comics** [not Mom's Apple Pie] in 1969 and Print Mint asked to reprint **Mom's 1**. Denis said okay, but was unsatisfied with the way the book was handled. When the copies did not sell for him through The Print Mint he decided to return to his home in Wisconsin where he formed Krupp Comic Works and published his own work through Kitchen Sink Enterprises. The reader is referred to his article in Jay Kennedy's *The Underground and Newave Price Guide*

[1983], p. 21 ff. At Wonder Con on April 2, 1993, in Oakland, California, I learned that Denis Kitchen would be moving to Massachusetts to take over Tundra which means there will be changes taking place at both Krupp and Tundra in the coming year.

Re **COMIX BOOK**, I fail to see how **COMIX BOOK** could be a "watered down version of **ARCADE**" when **COMIX BOOK 1** came out in October of 1974 and **ARCADE 1** was not printed until late Spring of 1975. **ARCADE** reflected the interests of Bill Griffith, Artie Spiegelman and their circle of friends and **COMIX BOOK** reflected the interests of Denis Kitchen and his friends. I think it's a matter of different strokes. The eclectic art in both publications predicted their rapid demise in a world dominated by Peanuts and Mickey Mouse.

Bill refers to Belier Press as an underground publisher, but it was not. Never published a single underground comic book. The press, run by Jeff Rund, reprinted bondage art from the late thirties and early forties, mainly the work of John Willie and Eric Stanton. Rund is responsible for the revival of interest in Betty Page since he published two magazines which reprinted Betty's fifties cheesecake photographs. His books were on sale at the San Diego Comic Convention where Dave Stevens saw them and shortly thereafter Betty showed up as a character in Stevens' *Rocketeer*.

It's clear that Griffith did not like Rand Holmes, but the curt dismissal of a fine artist of Holmes' stature by both Griffith and Groth as an "E-C spin-off guy" and "a cross between Wally Wood and the Freak Brothers" is uncalled for. Rand Holmes did live in the Bay Area for awhile in 1974, but he decided to return to Canada with his friend, Mary. Holmes is a superb artist, one who did not have the advantage [or disadvantage] of an established art school. He taught himself to draw by redrawing Wally Wood's science fiction stories. He got into the underground scene through the editor of the **Georgia Straight** who asked him to draw a hippy comic strip. Holmes came up with Harold Hedd. He and Shelton were not the only cartoonists doing stories about hippy characters and cats in those days.

AT WONDER CON

Though the Bay Area was the major locale for Underground comix in the seventies, their participation in conventions has dwindled to a couple of tables. **Ron Turner of Last Gasp** had only one table this year. He said he had gotten some of the **WEIRDOS** back into print and would publish **WEIRDO 28** later this year. Ron's latest is a collection called **GO NAKED** which features art by Charles Burns, Matt Groening, Kaz, & numerous others. It's about \$10 by mail and you'll get Ron's latest catalog. POB 410067, San Francisco, CA 94141-0067. I saw a copy of **BLAB 7** At Dan Clowes table [he did the cover], but have not have a chance to look at the contents yet. It's listed in **Kitchen Sink's Spring Catalog** which you can get from #2 Swamp Road, Princeton, WI 54968. Kellie Strom and Stephen Walsh's **ACID BATH** looks impressive. So does Burns' all color **BLOOD CLUB**. Kitchen now has Cherry Poptart and I got a copy of the 2nd **Cherries Jubilee** from Larry Welz. A model was on hand to play the role of Cherry and pass out pins. There was a Cherry Poptart lookalike contest held one evening but I was not there to see it. Among the judges was Dan O'Neill whose current comic strip runs in the weekly **BAY GUARDIAN**. A couple of Dan's panels are in the new issue of the second series of the **ARGONAUT**. Crumb has a drawing in there along with an article about Robert Williams paintings. Last Gasp handles the book. Say \$13 pp. It's about an inch thick. Lots of reading. There is even a two page article by Ron Turner.

Networker. If you want to contact Mike Friedrich or Lee Marrs at **Star*Reach Productions**, they have Suite 202, 2991 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705.

I bought a **Doonesbury** yoyo and it works just as well as my old Duncan. If you're interested in any of the **Doonesbury** stuff, write to 10 Liberty Ship Way, Suite #147, Sausalito, CA 94965. When I first saw that stuff in **SPY**, I thought it was a put on like **SNL**'s dog sex ad-mocking Calvin Klein, but, nope, all that **Doonesbury** stuff exists from t-shirts and pins to sew-on patches and a Mr. Butts ashtray.

Arn Saba is working on a musical production featuring **Neil the horse**. It is currently scheduled by Theater on the Square in downtown San Francisco for December of 1993.

People interested in **Pogo** originals by Walt Kelly might contact **Mark Burstein**, 341 Lovell Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941. Mark had some beautiful strips and panels on display at Wonder Con. \$700-\$1000.

A moment of silence was observed at the Con in memory of **Harvey Kurtzman**. A show of Kurtzman's art will be mounted at the **Cartoon Art Museum** in San Francisco later this year.

COMIX CONTACTS

Saulius Krusna
Persekininku K.
4589 Parecenu, P. O.
Alytaus Raj.
Lithuania

Norman Dog, who does a single panel gag for the East Bay **EXPRESS**, our local ad throwaway, has been attacked for using negative racial stereotypes in some of his weekly cartoons. A slant-eyed, buck-toothed Japanese character caused a ton of letters and the majority of those printed voted against Dog's character. Well, I don't want to defend this stereotype, but I have to say that all cartoon characters are stereotypes in one way or another. Would anyone like to argue that Cathy isn't a stereotype with her endless weight and shopping gags? That Duke isn't a stereotype of a dope-smoking gonzo journalist manqué? That Blondie isn't--choke!--a stereotypical bourgeois housewife-cum-caterer? No one seems to get upset when white middle-class businessmen are typed and deflated in endless *New Yorker* gags, but when any cartoonist ventures to include Asian or African people in a gag, here come the appallettes. The secret of getting your letter published in our local PC papers is to use the phrase *I was appalled by* and keep the gripe as short as an editor's attention span. Complaints about racial stereotyping never have the result the complainers think they will have. In the thirties and forties, there were black characters in cartoons, but after WW2, complaints from the NAACP reached the animation industry. What happened? Bob Clampett's **COAL BLACK AND DE SEBBEN DWARFS** and **TIN PAN ALLEY CATS** went out of circulation and black characters vanished from cartoons. Well, success! There were no more negative stereotypes, but there were no more blacks included in the cartoon world

MEGA-DADA ON HAIGHT STREET

Painter **Guy Colwell** has announced that he will destroy one of his paintings on the sidewalk in front of The Wasteland at 1660 Haight Street. This act of anarchic anti-art will take place May 1, 1993, at 1 pm. Colwell will saw his 60 x 72" painting, **RACE STREET**, into numerous small pieces. Whether this is an act of destruction, affirmation, negation, or liberation will depend upon the eye of the beholder. I suspect this deformation art will be well attended. It is not without precedent. I recall reading about a show which took place during the period of early Dada wherein axes were passed out to all those attending and the art happily destroyed during the evening. Back in 1970, Cliff Humphries, founder of Ecology Action, drove his car into Provo Park across from City Hall in Berkeley and proceeded to pass out tools to anyone who wished to help with its destruction. A couple of hundred people smashed and pounded Cliff's old Chevy into a pile of useless metal. It was quite liberating watching someone else's car obliterated. Afterwards, we all got into our own cars and drove home. Is Colwell liberating himself from the weight of all that art? Will he be arrested for art abuse?

WEIRD CITY 5 is \$2 from Dave Szurek, 1206 Wheeler, # 2, Hoquiam, WA 98550-1901. Dave likes to trade and rap and he's into horror films.

either. Some people argued in the exchange of letters about Dog's gags that there are ways Asian people can be caricatured that will not be seen as negative; come on! No matter how a cartoonist draws Asian or black people, those who want to see the drawing as a negative stereotype are going to see it that way. The slant of Asian eyes is used as shorthand by a cartoonist who wants to suggest an Asian character and it's neither positive or negative. Those who have residual memories of WW2 propaganda posters which featured Japanese people with buck teeth and slanted eyes are unlikely to accept any cartoonist's depiction of a Japanese character. The cartoonist who dares to caricature actors like Yaphet Kotto or Danny Glover is going to be called a racist. When a black cartoonist, Grass Green, drew a story about a character he called Reverend Jackman, he was criticized by black people for degrading his race. Who knows what these folks had to say to the young black artist who sent me a copy of **SAMBO SPADE, PRIVATE EYE**, a few years back.

Well, cartoonists are funny folks. Some react to attacks upon their PCness with timidity and stop drawing anything that offends. Others counterattack with outrageous images like Robert Crumb's Angelfood McSpade. I think comics reflect the real world and that world has racism, sexism, agism, capitalism, communism, & umpteem other isms and ologies in it. One cartoonist makes the president look like Moses coming down off the mountain while another makes him look like a grinning Howdy Doody. Show me a politically-correct cartoonist and I'll show you someone who has tossed out his bristol board. C.C.

Comix Plugola

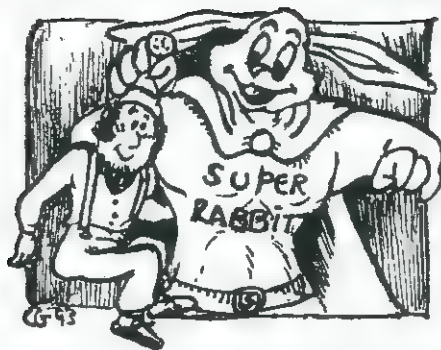
RABBITBOY 3 is \$1 from Bruce Stengl, 633 King St., Apt. 13, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. DZ.

Skinboy Lives.

The latest adventures of **Skinboy** plus a few old adventures retold come from **Starhead Comix**. Write for a catalog and prices. POB 30044, Seattle, WA. **Jim Williams** was at Wonder Con hanging out with **Dog boy Lafler** and friends. Fantagraphics will do a book of Jim's work this summer.

Dave Stevens' newest erotic sculpture is only \$200 bucks. Write to **Dark Horse Comics**, Dept. M-393, 10956 S. E. Main St., Milwaukie, OR 97222 for information.

Gary Usher has some nice reprint zines and some of his own work and is interested in trading with other newavers. His recent titles include: **THE ART OF H. C. GREENING, HARRY WOODS, DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE, and PREMATURE ANTI-FASCIST**. Write to Gary at 205 N. Vine St., Glenwood, IA 51534. He is currently working on an index of **CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY**, done by Artie Romero in Colorado in the early 1980s.



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THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SUPER RABBIT

SUPER RABBIT COMICS. New York: Timely, September 20, 1945. (date of filing of copyright). Overstreet says Fall of 1944 to November of 1948. 14 issues. Waffles, a poor little shoeshine rabbit finds a magic ring and when he rubs it he becomes **Super Rabbit**. This comic parodied the excesses of Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster's **SUPERMAN** [Orig. 1932, first DC story in **ACTION 1**, June, 1938, still published in 1993]. **SUPER RABBIT** appeared for the first time in **COMEDY COMICS 14** (New York: Timely, March, 1943). An imitation of **HOPPY, THE MARVEL BUNNY**, he was the third funny animal super hero and was given his own title in 1944. SR was styled after Disney's Max Hare [1935] via Bugs Bunny, who was streamlined by animator Robert McKimson. Super Rabbit appeared in **ALL SURPRISE COMICS, COMIC CAPERS, ANIMATED MOVIE TUNES, IDEAL COMICS, IT'S A DUCK'S LIFE, MOVIE TUNES, and WISCO** [See Overstreet 22, p. 408.]. The animators at Warner's Termite Terrace swiped him and made a Bugs Bunny **Super Rabbit** cartoon which was released April 3, 1943. He was the immediate model for **KID CARROTS** [1953], **THUNDERBUNNY** (1960) and **CAPTAIN CARROT** (1982). As a quasi-superhero, Bucky O'Hare owes SR a nod.

This Spring marks the fiftieth anniversary of the rabbit of steel and one can only wonder at the lack of attention given the famous Hare of Tomorrow. No covers on **TCJ** and **CBG**. No guest shots on Oprah, Donahue, Arsenio, or Letterman. No profile in **PEOPLE**. Fact is, Super Rabbit was a funny strip and many of the stories were quite well done. In **ALL SURPRISE 7**, there is a gas shortage due to the war and a nefarious group of cab company crooks kidnaps little kids to peddle the cabs around. SR lets himself be snatched by the bad guys so he can find their hideout and get the details of the scam then he breaks up the gang and turns the crooks over to the cops. 1945 was one of his best years.

Super Rabbit was a general parody of superheroism as it existed in 1945. The character wore the cavalier boots swiped by C. C. Beck from D'Artagnan for Captain Marvel. Instead of the little white gloves favored by Mickey Mouse and Disney's stable of characters, SR wore a pair of large orange gloves. Unlike most of his cucular peers, he was tailless in most of his adventures. His pullover was normally light blue while his pre-Fonda form-fit leotard was a darker blue. A gold button secured his short cape, another legacy from The Three Musketeers, and his belt buckle featured the letter S. SR's face was more bunny than hare [The two are synonymous in the public mind, but very different in nature. Rabbits burrow and live in warrens underground, while hares live in forms above ground. Hares leap at amazing speeds, the fastest listed at over 45 miles an hour in Guinness. The rabbits in comic stories and cartoons are all hares and Bugs is, en effet, not a bunny at all.]. The colorist usually made SR pink which was always curious to me, because pink was associated with little girls and when I was a kid no little girls read comic books like SR. My sister read Little Lulu once in awhile, but showed little interest in anything Super.

Super Rabbit. 50 years old in 1993. No reprints. No anthologies. No commemorative articles.

Outside of **COMIX WAVE**, that is.

--CLAY GEERDES

Joe Bob Briggs reviews **TRADER HORNEE** in the latest **WE ARE THE WEIRD**. \$3 from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. It's always fun to read a guy who is not afraid of political incorrectness. Texas is a world apart. I can't even rent any of the videos JB talks about. The stores don't carry them. I notice they have all the femme flasher stuff though.

KID ETERNITY

I loved Kid Eternity in the forties. He was the lead in **HIT COMICS** [origin in #25, last story in #60] and appeared in his own title for 18 issues [1946-49]. The idea was inspired by the movie **HERE COMES MR. JORDAN** [1941, remade as **HEAVEN CAN WAIT** [1978]]. Watched over by the Keeper, Kid Eternity helps people who are in trouble. The snapper always takes place when the Kid gets in a tight spot and calls in a famous character from history to help him out. He does this by calling out *Eternity* the way Billy Batson yells *Shazam!* Magic words were hip in the forties. Grant Morrison wrote a three issue mini-series reviving the character in 1991 and he's back as of May, 1993. I wish I could say something good about this revival, but I can't. The art is xerox hack and the story sucks. The Kid's character has been destroyed in order to fit him into DC's comic noir Vertigo line and the people who perpetrated this graphic dung should have their eyelids taped open and be forced to watch a nonstop marathon of Satanic ritual slasher films. The original stories were beautifully drawn and when I reread a couple last night they held up quite well. In the 1993 version, a girl tears off her skin and eats it. Ah. Well, what do I know? Maybe the grungies are into cannibalism and think this is primo comic book fare, but I have yet to see much good come of restyling and rescripting the golden age comic heroes.

Grant Morrison's **SEBASTIAN O** is off to a good start, though the art appears rather stiff and traced. I don't know. I just have an aversion to looking at obvious tracing. It certainly isn't art. Sebastian is a psycho who escapes to get revenge on those who put him in Bedlam. Not the freshest theme around, but Morrison writes a good story and he has my interest thusfar.

BUNNYCIDE IN CALIFORNIA

And, yes, alas, it's sad, but true. The Easter Bunny is no longer with us. He was run over by Dan O'Neill in a comic strip printed locally in the **BAY GUARDIAN** on April 14, 1993. O'Neill disposed of the body so it would not be found and he has yet to be brought to justice for this heinous crime.



The artwork in **SPAWN** reminds me of Aubrey Beardsley and Alex Niño.

It fluctuates between spectacular and ornate to downright dreadful. The costumes are completely ridiculous and nonfunctional, particularly those worn by the women characters. Here's Angela, a woman character, wearing armor on her lower legs and over her breasts while her thighs and stomach are bare. How absurd can you get? Here's a shot of her naked ass in the air as she dives into what appears to be a pool of blood. Design transcends reality in this clubfooted Medieval fantasy which moves from past to present. Fact is, Angela couldn't even move with all that weight on her lower legs and she's clearly designed as a sexual tease for adolescent boys who prefer image to substance. There is a lot of artistic laziness in **SPAWN**. A few of the panels are dramatic splashes, overly embellished, while others are quickly done and left uncorrected. Angela has wings on her ears in a splash then there are several panels where she has only one wing. After all the praise I heard about McFarland's work, I expected a lot more attention to detail. I found his panel continuity very poor and no balance at all between art and story. Since McFarland is wealthy and making big bucks for his company, it is no surprise to me that his editors are afraid to confront him on what he would be likely to dismiss as the minor aspects of sequential art.

Terry Laban's third **CUD** is as funny as the first two. Bob Cud has to be the most unlikely performance artist to ever take up the trade. Laban takes on Frankie and Annette in a parody of the beach movies of the sixties. Mickey Pimple, Teen Adventurer pokes more than a little fun at the Young Indiana Jones series of George Lucas.

MAMMOGRAMS ON PARADE

Interesting that **Vanity Fair**, a magazine that tries to link itself with all things erotic and expensive, would print a picture of an anxious Sharon Stone examining her breasts for lumps [April cover]. Wild thing? Hardly. Cancer thing? We won't know until the biopsy returns. As one who has a friend recently diagnosed with breast cancer, that cover of **Vanity Fair** provoked anxiety in me and not a trace of lust for the useless products sandwiched between **VF**'s perfumed pages. I subscribed to **VF** last year after seeing a few interesting socio-political articles therein. From the child pornography of Madonna to the geriatric sex of Liz Taylor--this generation will be saying I'll always remember her the way she looked offering me a condom on the cover of **Vanity Fair**--to Sharon Stone checking for lumps, it has not been the best experience. Shock images may get attention, but I doubt that they sell products and a cover that has all the glamour of an emergency visit to the gynecologist is not likely to add any digits to the bank accounts of people who get off having their names on underwear.

Pat Moriarity's **BIG MOUTH 2** has stories by Peter Bagge, Bob Crabb, Kim Deitch, and a number of others, most of them drawn by Moriarity who has a nice free-form cartooning style. I laughed at most of the stories in this one.

while I enjoyed the strips by Richard Sala, Spain, Mary Fleener and others printed in **BLAB!** 7, I was a wee bit disappointed that the issue contained no interviews or commentary. **BLAB!** was a good source of writing about comics and I hope future issues continue in the magazine's original historical direction.

Unpublicity Stunts: Goodbye to Vic Morrow, Brandon Lee, and...

"It wasn't long before the grim statistics revealed just how hazardous these stunts were. In 1922 a double for Pearl White in *The Perils of Pauline* misjudged a jump from a bus and came crashing to his death. During the filming of the chariot race in the silent version of *Ben-Hur*, one of the chariots lost a wheel and the driver was catapulted thirty feet into the air; he died later of internal injuries. In the years from 1925-1930, according to John Baxter's book **STUNT**, 10,794 people were injured in California film production. Fifty-five people, most of them stunt men or women, died. In 1929 alone, 16 people were killed on movie sets. The aerial stunts that became the rage in the late 1920's claimed a significant number of lives. Three stunt pilots died during the making of Howard Hughes's *Hells Angels*. And in 1930, while filming *Such Men Are Dangerous*, a melodrama starring Warner Baxter, two small planes collided and 10 crew members perished, including the director, Kenneth Hawks, the brother of Howard Hawks. As the years passed, death and serious injury continued to be an assumed risk among Hollywood stunt men. In 1963 stunt man Bob Morgan, the husband of actress Yvonne De Carlo, lost a leg and several vertebrae when he was crushed by a railroad car while filming *How the West Was Won*. Two years later Jimmy Stewart's stunt double was killed while staging a crash-landing in *The Flight of the Phoenix*. Clint Eastwood's double lost his footing and slid to his death in One of the mountain-climbing scenes in *The Eiger Sanction*. And stunt woman Heidi Von Beltz won a four-million-dollar lawsuit when she was paralyzed from the neck down during a poorly planned crash and pileup scene in *The Cannonball Run*.

-Stephen Farber and Marc Green
OUTRAGEOUS CONDUCT: ART, EGO, AND THE TWILIGHT ZONE CASE.
New York: Arbor House, 1988.

Hey, guys, if you're going to draw and publish a comic book about someone living, you have to negotiate with that person for the rights. You can't just sit down and draw the comic book and publish it. Get real. This is capitalist America here. In April, 49ers quarterback Joe Montana filed a million dollar lawsuit against Revolutionary Comics and Personality Comics for publishing an unauthorized biography which included himself and his wife. If you do any unauthorized biography, written or drawn, you should expect to hear from your subject, but the law is funny. Using drawings of a person infringes upon their rights and you have to pay. Words about other people are okay. Frank Sinatra sued Kitty Kelley to try to stop her biography of him a few years back, but Frank lost. Revolutionary Comics publisher Todd Loren told New Kids on the Block they were infringing on his First Amendment rights by demanding royalties on a comic book bio of the group. Will Montana get this million to add to his other millions? Who knows what the judge will decide. Personally, I think Joe should have been consulted.

-C.G.

1973: CLARK'S SISTER IS REPRIMANDED FOR BUYING HIM COMIC BOOKS FOR HIS 10TH BIRTHDAY, BECAUSE IT MIGHT ADVERSELY AFFECT HIS DEVELOPMENT.



1993: CLARK HAS SINCE OVERCOME HIS OLD ADDICTION TO COMIC BOOKS, BUT IS NOW ADDICTED TO SOMETHING ELSE: CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE!



TEXAS FU

Does Joe Bob Briggs make up those movies he reviews in **WE ARE THE WEIRD**? Why have I never seen any of those movies advertised in the Bay Area? Is there really a Stacey Travis? Is there a movie called **NEKROMANTIC**? Is that guy in buckskin drag with his arm around Michelle Bauer really Joe Bob or did he hire a male model as a body double? You know writers are folks who answer questions that haven't been asked and it is possible that some of us rap about movies that haven't been made. Is it possible that Joe Bob has a studio in Dallas where he and his gang fake movie stills and make up outrageous titles just so he can count the coyote bites and breasts and vampiric overbite fu in his **WEIRD** newsletter and sell it to your readers for \$3 a hit? Is there really a Joe Bob Briggs? Write and see. POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. Is there really a Clay Geerdes? Heh! Heh!

Dave Sim discusses pen tips and inking in **CEREBUS 169**. Some good information for those getting into the craft of comic art. If you don't see Dave's comic locally, order one from Aardvark-Vanaheim, POB 1674, Sta C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2. You can see Dave discuss his Cerebus project on Rhino's **MASTERS OF COMIC BOOK ART** tape. 1987.

A FLETHORA OF LAWYERS

America may lack engineers and scientists, but we lead the world in the production of lawyers. America has half the lawyers in the entire world. . . . We have four percent of the world population. We have eighteen percent of the world economy. But we have fifty percent of the lawyers. And thirty-five thousand more every year, pouring out of the schools. That's where our productivity's directed. That's where our national focus is. Half our TV shows are about lawyers. American has become Land of Lawyers. Everybody suing. Everybody disputing. Everybody in court. After all, three quarters of a million American lawyers have to do something. That have to make their three hundred thousand a year. Other countries think we're crazy.

Michael Crichton
RISEING SUN, 1992.

Bill Griffith told Gary Groth that **COMIX BOOK** was a cheap imitation of **ARCADE** [TCJ]. I found that a bit puzzling since **COMIX BOOK** came out a year before **ARCADE**. And who was in that first issue of **COMIX BOOK**? Tim Boxell, Howard Cruse, Vince Davis, Kim Deitch, Evert Geradts, Don Glassford, Justin Green, Denis Kitchen, Peter Loft, Peter Poplaski, John Pound, Ted Richards, Trina Robbins, Bill Sanders, Scott Shaw, Art Spiegelman (his **ACE HOLE** story), Steve Stiles, Skip Williamson, and Basil Wolverton. Since Art Spiegelman was one of the editors of **ARCADE**, does this mean that Art is a cheap imitation of himself, Bill?

The truth of the matter is that underground publishers paid when they paid, but Marvel was the home of the regular paycheck and when the word went around that Stan Lee and Marvel were backing **COMIX BOOK**, the majority of the artists on the scene sent anything they had ready in hopes of getting one of those paychecks. Did they **SELL OUT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT**? No, they sold some art for rent and grocery money.

BOSTON BEEHIVES

You can read all about the women's hockey team, the Boston Beehives, in the latest issue of **GIRL JOCK**, the mag that makes up for the lack of coverage of women in sports in the male oriented mags like Sport's Illustrated. Cartoonists include Joan Bilty and Julie Frank. \$3.95 from POB 2533, Berkeley, CA 94702.

ART GUARDS

Turns out that almost half the guys working as guards at the Harvard Art Museums in Cambridge are artists and Mick Cusimano is one of them. Mick's work appears in **SQUAWK** and **FINE PRINT**. Folks in the Boston area can find copies at the Naked City Coffeehouse or in the foyer of Tower Records.

CLAY GEERDES **COMIX WAVE 139**
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FOR BETTER...OR WORSE?

Yes, but what if you're gay and you come out in a comic strip? What price gay lib in the funny papers? Lynn Johnson devoted a recent story in her *For Better or Worse* strip to Lawrence's coming out of the closet. Universal Press Syndicate reported 20 cancellations and said that 40 of the 1400 papers that take the strip declined to run it until the sequence ended. Some people cancelled their papers in Memphis, Denver, and St. Louis. Lynn Johnson was surprised at the amount of anger and hatred she stimulated with her strip. She told *Examiner* columnist Stephanie Salter: "I felt that if I wrote a story about a young man who has a difference, and I did it sensitively with dignity, that people would realize it was a story about acceptance and not homosexuality. I never even mentioned the word 'sex.'" [*Examiner*, 4/25/93, p. A-13]. Johnson, 45, mother of two teenagers, one 15, the other 20, was amazed at the flood of mail she received re the Lawrence story. She did the story for a friend who died of AIDS.

Living in the Bay Area where the gay population constitutes a significant voting bloc, I've always been surprised to see so little of the gay lifestyle reflected in the daily comic strips. I know many people who have gone through the experience Lawrence's father went through in Johnson's strip and I thought her treatment was realistic and valid. Gay cartoonists have been a part of the underground comix scene since the early seventies, some overtly, others covertly and it is likely that the general public will be seeing more gay themes in comic strips in the coming years. Gay and bisexuality is dealt with openly in the current run of **SHADE THE INCREDIBLE CHANGING MAN**. I know the newspaper comic strip is incredibly reactionary as a form and it takes years for reality to infiltrate those sacred panels and force them to become mirrors of the real world in contrast to little boxes of attitudes few people ever had. If I were to see a comic strip that reflected the polyglot multiracial neighborhood I live in in Berkeley, that strip would have black Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, black Muslims, yuppies, gay men and women, Jews, Japanese, and whoever the newest tenants are. The majority of the strips that run in my local paper, the *Oakland Tribune*, are unrelated to my lifestyle. As a hetero male living in this multiracial neighborhood, I am a minority member, but I don't really feel that way. I've been here for fifteen years and I enjoy the differences. I've never felt the need to make the people around me conform to my way of thinking. When I compare the comic pages with my community, I find that a lot of people have been excluded, that the editors who buy the strips have arbitrarily decided that most of the people in my community do not exist, that the comic strips will reflect only a small percentage of the people who live here. No, I don't like that. I feel that the comic pages should reflect the community, not be ongoing propaganda for an artificial lifestyle no one lives.

Go for it, Lynn. For every reader you lose, you'll gain ten more who respect truth and integrity over mediocrity. -C. G. 4/27/93

Tomorrow is an electric age.
--William Shatner

EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED KID STRIPS

If you saw **Whoopi Goldberg** interview **Charles Schulz** some weeks back, you learned that Whoopi has Woodstock tattooed on or very near her left breast. Make a note.

I read an article from the **Chicago Tribune** recently [I lost my copy so can't give you the reference, so you'll have to check the RGP for yourself.] in which Schulz was called a burn-out. The writer noted numerous worn-out and lame gag lines Schulz has used ad infinitum, well, that's true of most cartoonists who have long strip careers, but Schulz is someone I can still read and enjoy. Sure, I've seen the gag before, but I've seen all the movie plots before, too. Cartooning is a visual profession and repetition is the key to economic survival. I think Schulz has done well since he got his first work published in **TIP TOP** back in 1949. As far as I know, he has always done his own work and he doesn't even buy gags like Hank Ketchum and numerous other one-panel cartoonists.

Someone who needs to take a little time off is Watterson. I think he has lost perspective on his Calvin and Hobbes strip. Calvin has been a hostile nasty little asshole for a long time now, a little boy with a great imagination, but no friends, a character with no real relationships at all, certainly not with his parents who have to deal with his habitually negative behavior. For all his fumbling around, Charley Brown relates to other kids; so does Lucy Van Pelt who comes closest to Calvin in her nasty behavior. Watterson is a fine cartoonist, but many of his recent strips show a slipshod approach to the craft. He scribbles the characters and repeats the sledding routine or a Calvin attack on Susie, but his heart isn't in it. If he feels the characters are exhausted, he ought to quit for awhile and draw something else. I'm sure he has other ideas. Continuing to display what has become regressive behavior in his strip, Watterson is projecting pathological behavior as entertainment. It's normal for children to give up their imaginary friends and stuffed animals when they enter school, to move on to real relationships with their peers. My reaction to the recent C&H strips has been negative. It's not funny to watch a little boy falling at life. It's sad. Schulz realized this when he let Charley Brown win his first baseball game.

-Clay Geerdes 5/9/93

FRESNO SKETCHBOOK

I first met Doug Hansen when he was 19. He was coming up the driveway to my Indian Rock place back in 1973 when I was working on the first Underground Comix Convention with the guys from what is now Comics and Comix. Doug did some nice work for the minis and found his niche doing editorial cartoons and illos from the **FRESNO BEE**. A collection of these sketches had been published by the paper. 1626 E Street, Fresno, California 93786-0001. A lot of familiar images. I taught English in Fresno at the State College back in 1965-67.

The young star of **This Boy's Life**, **Leonardo DiCaprio**, is the son of **George DiCaprio**. In the early days of the underground comix, George did **GREASER COMICS**. He came to the Bay Area around the time of the first Underground Comix Convention in April of 1973 then moved to Los Angeles around 1977.

Image Magazine for April 18, 1993, featured articles on **Art Spiegelman** and **Bill Griffith**, along with a nice tribute to **Harvey Kurtzman**.

SHE-INAL??

Urinette, a company in Pensacola, Florida, markets a urinal for females. The She-inal has a funnel with a long handle attached to a flexible hose leading up to a ceramic fixture. A dispenser provides a biodegradable paper cover for the funnel. Since there is no seat, the company says, the She-inal is more sanitary than a typical public toilet. And because users don't have to spend time covering a seat with toilet paper or undressing so much, they can use the She-inal faster.

Anything to get more work out of the employees, huh?

The Microcenter in Moffitt Library over at UC has been allowing people to compute in the nude. This gives a whole new meaning to spread sheets, n'est pas? Oh, well, as long as they hose the place down at the end of the day.

Robert Beerbohm is curator of a gallery devoted to the art of the late **Rick Griffin**. The gallery is located in the Cannery complex in San Francisco.

STANLEY MOUSE HAS LIVER SURGERY

Poster artist **Stanley Mouse**, 52, entered the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco in April of 1993, diagnosed with a serious liver ailment. Mouse is best known for his art work for the Grateful Dead. He created the skull and roses logo and gave the Dead their psychedelic image. With his collaborator Alton Kelley, Mouse designed many posters for the Avalon Ballroom in the mid and late sixties. He went on to design iconographic images for Journey, Steppenwolf, and the Jefferson Starship. Born Stanley Miller, is it suspected that Mouse's liver disease is related to inhalation of toxic fumes from his air brushes. He received a liver transplant from a donor in Arizona on Sunday, April 25, 1993. Part of the bill was paid by the Grateful Dead and the rest will be raised through benefit concerts being organized by several bands. Like most artists, Mouse had no medical insurance. If you'd like to help, send a donation to the Freehand Foundation, West America Bank, 1177 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA 94939. Ref: Peter Stack, Chronicle, 4/28/93, pp. E-1, 2.

PLASTER CASTER GETS CASTS BACK

Back in the sixties when Janis Joplin was singing *Down on Me* just about every weekend at the Avalon on Sutter in San Francisco, a couple of women were traveling around the backstage and dressing rooms of earth making

plaster casts of famous erections. You can read the details in a book Rolling Stone did called *The Groupies* if you can find a copy in an old bookstore in your area. But what you probably don't know is that Plaster Caster **Cynthia Albritton** recently won a suit against Frank Zappa's former manager Herb Cohen, forcing him to return the castings she had given him for safe keeping. She sued Cohen for her mementos and he sued her. Cohen alleged that a contract for Albritton to produce diaries about her experiences with rock stars for his company, Bizarre Productions, Inc., included rights to the casts. Superior Court Judge Lillian Stevens decided in favor of Albritton. Involved were 23 bronze casts of rock star genitalia made from her original plaster molds. The original plaster casts were lost or destroyed after metal casts were made. 4/93

BABY SUE continues lambasting anything and everything in her latest pink covered issue. \$1 for a sample copy. POB 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111.

STEREOTYPED ARABS IN DISNEY'S ALLADIN

The following passage is quoted from Jack Shaheen's "Shattering Stereotypes: Media Images of Arabs," a lecture given at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Jan. 26, 1993. For further information about Professor Shaheen's forthcoming book, *THE COMIC BOOK ARAB*, send an SASE to David Barsamian, 2129 Mapleton, Boulder, CO 80304. A tape of the lecture is available.

Aladdin?

Yes, I saw Disney's *Aladdin*. I think there were excellent opportunities for Disney to change the stereotypes in *Aladdin*. There are three major mistakes in *Aladdin*. One is the opening song, which tags an entire people as being barbaric. No room for that in a Disney film. Two, all of the townspeople, the merchants and members of the sultan's guards, are barbaric. They run around with sabers trying to cut off hands. There's one scene in the film where the princess takes an apple to give to a starving child, and the merchant is going to cut off her hand with a saber. That's sort of a shot against Islam and also against the people. Now, whenever you criticize you should always try to have a solution. If you look at the images of the people—I'm not talking about Jasmine and Aladdin, whom by the way they call "Al." They won't even call him Aladdin. He says, "Just call me al." If you look at the people who inhabit the underwater kingdom in *The Little Mermaid*, a lovely film, they're nice people. Disney could very easily have done that with this particular film, instead of demonizing the residents of this fictional kingdom. He could have had balanced images and had the vendors in the marketplace be benevolent.

Finally, where was Aladdin's mother, who plays such a prominent role? She was excluded. Disney's producers said she was excluded because she slowed down the movie. You can't have a mother. Come on! If they have enough imagination to do what they did with Robin Williams and the genie, certainly we could have had an animated mother who didn't slow the plot! What an excuse! I guess now you've got my Irish up. My name is Shaheen, which is close to Sheehan and Shanahan. What outrages me most about Disney is the silence. They simply will not have a dialogue with concerned people about this film. There's an induced silence on the part of Disney not to comment. One spokesperson said, "We've had some criticisms, but they're just from a small minority. They don't count." It's making a ton of money. It's a number one. Jasmine and Aladdin are marvelous characters. Have the villain, Jafar. But don't denigrate the entire people or culture with the manner in which they've done it.

IF YOU WANNA BE LIKE ME,
DEBONAIR AND SUAVE,
JUST READ CLAY GEERDES'
COMIX WAVE!



CLAY GEERDES COMIX WAVE 140
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The third issue of **ART ALTERNATIVES** features the work of R. K. Sloane, who reveals that he was only 16 when he did *R. K. Sloane's Comix and Stories* for Gary Arlington back in 1969. Todd Schorr, Gary Panter, and Jeff Gaither are also featured. The mag is published by Harvey Shapiro, 450 Seventh Ave., Suite 2305, New York, NY 10123-2305. Probably \$7 by mail.

WHY HEALTH CARE IS SO EXPENSIVE

The boy had spent the last twenty-two hours of his life in the Intensive Care Unit at Western Pediatric, not a second of it in a conscious state. From a medical point of view it was open and shut: hopeless. The admitting intern had kept his notes factual and objective, labeling it *Auto vs Pedestrian*, in the quaint lexicon of medicine that makes tragedy sound like a sporting event. He'd been brought in by ambulance, battered, crushed, skull shredded, all but his most rudimentary bodily functions gone. Yet thousands of dollars had been spent delaying the inevitable, and enough pages had been filled to create a medical chart the size of a textbook. I leafed through them: nursing notes, with their compulsive counting of intake and output, the child reduced to cubic centimeters of fluid and plumbing; ICU graphs, progress notes--that was a cruel joke--consultations from neuro-surgeons, neurologists, nephrologists, radiologists, cardiologists; blood tests, X-rays, scans, shunts, sutures, intravenous feedings, parental nutritional supplements, respiratory therapy, and, finally, the autopsy.

--Jonathan Kellerman

WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS, 1985.

Jesus is featured in a paid ad in **The Daily Californian**. Just the Plokhurst painting of Jesus as a long-haired blonde with blue eyes and the words *Paid Ad*. This ad began to show up in 1992. Fact is, no one knows how the historical Jesus looked, not even those Italian sculptors and painters who had the most influence on contemporary renditions. If he was a blue-eyed blonde, he was the only one living in Judea at the time. One of the earliest underground comix, Frank Stack's *New Adventures of Jesus* [Oct. 21, 1969] depicted Jesus as a mellow hippy and we used to joke about it. People went to church and worshipped a guy who looked like a hippy, but they'd be on the phone to the cops if this guy came to their door selling magazine subscriptions. Guys with hair an inch long used to stand around on Berkeley street corners preaching Jesus. The noon hour up at Cal was often spent with bald Krishnans chanting while the Christians ranted, all of it backed up by some loud rock and roll band playing away in lower Sproul Plaza. What a world, huh? A guy who claims to be a Christian gave the order to destroy the holy land to test hi-tech weaponry. The war conducted by the West in Viet Nam converted a lot of Christians to Eastern philosophies in the sixties. It's still to be decided whether the East or the West is most barbaric. Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Truman, Reagan, Bush--all committed mass murder in the name of the state.

BATMAN VS HOPALONG CASSIDY

A new DC team-up? Nope. A war over milk cartons in the cafeterias in Tulare, California, schools. Seems Producers Dairy Products had milk cartons with Batman and Hopalong Cassidy on them and the kids fought over them during lunch hour. Everyone wanted a Batman carton and no one wanted Hopalong Cassidy. So they're keeping Batman, right? Nope again. The powers at the school prefer Hoppy's clean image and have asked the dairy not to send anymore cartons with Batman on them.

So who's Hopalong Cassidy? In my childhood, he was a popular western hero known for riding a white horse and rarely if ever losing his hat during a fist fight. His sidekick, California Carlson, always called him Hoppy. Cassidy and his pals would ride into a town and take on a corrupt banker who was stealing the homes of poor widows in order to sell their land to the railroad. He often turned out to be working undercover as a federal agent. William Boyd patterned his character after Colonel Tim McCoy. Both dressed like dandies and were extremely polite to kids, women, and old geezers. Boyd bought up the rights to his old movies in his later years and wound up quite wealthy during the heyday of B television when the medium was buying everything in sight to fill air time.

Batman's positive image was destroyed by Frank Miller with his Dark Knight concept and the two films which presented Batman as a humorless vengeful schizoid man pretty well washed him up as any kind of positive role model for young people.

Frederic Wertham suggested in **SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT** [1953] that the relationship between Batman [Bruce Wayne] and Dick Grayson [Robin] was homosexual, but in my opinion that was all in Fred's head. I grew up reading Batman and Robin stories and it was always apparent to me that theirs was a

father-son relationship. Excluding Robin, the Warner films cast Batman as a lonely, warped person prone to violent outbursts, one who substitutes technology for human feeling. By delving so deeply into the darker side of Batman's character, recent stories and films have negated the lighter side of superheroism which balanced the early comic book stories. One might argue that Hopalong Cassidy movies were unbalanced by being excessively sentimental, but by the same token the solution was not to overdevelop the dark side at the expense of all the positive values through which human beings live in a community. Modern films, given to excessive stunts and special effects, stimulate only fear, angst, despair, and anomie. The viewer feels relieved at the end of **BATMAN RETURNS**, not because balance has been restored and there is hope for us all but because the cacaphony has ended.

In **DIRTY HARRY**, a psychopathic serial killer pays a man to beat him so he can blame the detective who has been following him for that beating. This is the way the contemporary moviegoer feels after experiencing **BATMAN RETURNS** or **DARKMAN** or **THE RUNNING MAN**. You see a Hopalong Cassidy movie and you feel that order has been restored. The viewer pays **BATMAN** to beat him up for two hours and is afraid to go out into the lobby.

I can't help but compare things. As a boy watching Hoppy's westerns, I would go home and play cowboys with the kids on the block. We shot each other with cap pistols and tried to lasso each other with clothesline rope, but it was all a game and when it was time to go in for supper we forgot all about it. Today's kids are often armed with real guns and not a day goes by without me reading about one or another of them killing someone on the street. Yes, I think what happens on the street is related to the orientation of current films and television shows. In the battle between Hopalong Cassidy and Batman, Hoppy gets my vote.

--Clay Geerdes

VAMPIRELLA LIVES

Rip Off Press is starting a line of comic books aimed at all ages. The first title under the new imprint, Iguana Comics, will be **Blood Seekers**. A stat of the cover shows a couple of Kirby swipes and a direct swipe of Vampirella. The artist didn't even bother to change the costume. If murder and bloodshed constitute ROP's idea of what is suitable for all ages, I extend my sympathy. I see no reason why younger kids cannot go on reading *Freak Brothers* and *Wonder Warthog* funnybooks as they do in spite of the adults only disclaimer. I'd rather the kids got into Shelton's *MAD*-inspired satirical trip than waste time on more vampire crap. I can see that ROP is trying to imitate and cash in on the success of Image, but that may not be such an easy nut to crack. The market is already saturated with big ugly cybernetic bags of illiteracy and I don't see why any company would want to add to the intellectual dunghope. Information on Iguana from Kathy Todd, POB 4686, Auburn, CA 95604.

Bruce N. Duncan has 30 copies of **SEEKING VISION** for sale at \$15 each. Order care of B.E.F.P., 2362 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Canadian customs continues to be the arbitrary censor of what Canadian citizens may receive from foreign sources and read. A new group is forming to protest this invasion of civic privacy. For information about **Sancensure**, drop a note to Jacques Boivin, 4531 Bordeaux, Montréal, Canada H2H 1Z9.

I visited Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia, recently, and while there I stopped in at a new comic book store called **Legends** [633 Johnson St. V8W 1M7]. The owner, a young man named **Grant Wilson**, has a respectable stash of undergrounds, but most of his business comes from contemporary stuff.

I was being typical tourist, of course, since the area was completely new to me. The motel was a polyglot world where I woke up hearing German, Japanese, Italian, and a number of dialects unfamiliar to me. I photographed the Butchart gardens, the Crystal Garden, Parliament, and walked through the Empress Hotel to check out high tea. I had an image of a lot of guys who looked like Nigel Bruce or Doctor Who sipping tea while they chatted in stilted accents about the Queen, but most of the tables were filled with tourists like me, few of them wearing anything beyond casual clothes. I did see a couple of ties, but only the waiters were dressed formally. It was a stuffy room congested with ancient furniture and uncomfortable chairs and I was glad to be out in the open air once again. Like everything else in Victoria, the price was absurdly high. \$17.50 plus tip for tea and cakes. If you thought it was cheaper to live in Canada, think again. Even in Canadian dollars [\$1 American was equal to \$1.24 Canadian when I was there.], everything was 20-50% higher than I am used to paying around Berkeley. Gas is about \$2 a gallon and when you buy at a gas station and pay in American money, they only give you ten percent which means they steal the rest. Everything is sold in liters and grams so the prices are deceptive to an American, much higher than you think. I saw things like AAA batteries for almost \$2 apiece. The cheddar cheese I like was twice as much in the local stores. Butter was \$1 higher. Housing just as absurd as California. Since any foreign money seems unreal, you wind up spending a lot more than you think you are spending.

If you're thinking of going to Canada, here are some tips. Going through Canadian customs is easier than going through US customs upon return. You have to have a birth certificate, Driver's license, Social Security Card, and a credit card. You don't need a passport, but it seems to simplify things. We were waved through in Victoria. All they ask is the purpose of your visit and how long you intend to stay. Your identification is verified at the check-in desk by the airline people. ID is checked more carefully when you're trying to get back into the States. In each direction, you fill out a customs declaration form. You are allowed up to \$400 in goods on reentry; if you have anything over, you have to pay a fee. Visitors to Canada are refunded most of the GST [Goods and Services Tax], so save your receipts and mail in the form when you get back home. They accepted

our papers and did not search our luggage. Since they solicit tourists nationally, I did not suspect they would do anything but make us welcome at the border.

From the Bay Area, you fly Alaska from Oakland or San Francisco to Seattle, Washington, then switch to Horizon for the jump from Seattle to Victoria.

Victoria used to be a small town, then it was made the seat of Parliament and the capital and it began to expand outward. The core of the town remains quasi-antique, but the surrounding architecture is new and the changes are evident. There are a lot of new motels, hotels, and retirement condos and I suspect there are more senior citizens than young people in the population. A

survey of the yellow pages tells the story. There are 24 pages of lawyers, 15 pages of Computers and software companies and services, and 15 pages of Pizza outlets. So your average person must be a lawyer with a computer who sends out for pizza, right? Along the causeway in the tourist area around the inner harbor which is framed by parliament, the British Museum, The Empress Hotel, and a number of motels, people ride back and forth in three wheeled pedicabs or take Tally Ho tours in carriages drawn by pairs of horses. Behind the horse and just below the single driver is a canvas trough because, of course, horses shit a lot, so one hears the clop clop of the horses and sees the tourists straining to see this and that while the canvas bag fills up with road apples. We did not take one of this fragrant tour, getting enough of the smell just walking to the museum or Crystal Garden. At every corner there were tour groups and people were posing in front of the statue of Queen Victoria or on the steps of Parliament or next to one of the anachronistic Cawachin totempoles that are everywhere on the Island. Originally, the pole was carved and set facing the sun and the water, then the house was constructed behind it, so you would not see one of these house-poles standing alone and to see them standing on street corners only reminds one that the houses have been destroyed along with the people who inhabited them. The poles had a protective function and were designed to frighten away ghosts or other evil spirits.

The exploitation of Indian art and artifacts is ubiquitous. We drove to Duncan and visited the Indian Heritage Center which was completed in 1990 and we had the opportunity to watch a young Cawachin work on one of the cedar poles. These days the basic form is cut out with chainsaws, then various student artists take turns working on the separate parts of the legend. Duncan has established a Totem walk around the town and there are 22 poles displayed in the community. The train station in Duncan is now a small museum and a retired nurse who volunteers there has put in a replica of the hospital room in which she spent most of her life. The room is complete with a white-uniformed mannikin.

The Indian carvings and totempoles are impressive, but one has a strange feeling seeing them juxtaposed to bank and insurance buildings or sitting outside car dealers' showrooms. In a slide show at the Center a young Cawachin remarked that the white man

brought the Indians three things: Alcoholism, small pox, and missionaries. Most of the tribes in the area were killed in the mid-1800s by small pox. There is a history of the Kwakiutl tribe in the British Museum. The past is everywhere.

I am used to beggars, drunks, and the mentally ill dominating the streets of Berkeley and was surprised to see none of these anywhere in Victoria. If there is a skid row, I never found it. One long-haired kid asked us for some change, but he didn't look like he needed it. A woman at our motel said a lot of rich kids panhandled along the causeway for the experience. She said they knew the other side of life and wanted to see what it was like to live in the street. I recall a lot of this in Haight-Ashbury in 1965-67. I talked to the woman about the American Medical Establishment and the way people were cheated at every turn and she said she paid \$21 dollars a year and got complete care! In the US, people pay thousands of dollars all their lives then when they get old and need the care their premiums are raised beyond what they can pay so they are ripped off and their savings stolen. This happened to one of my aunts last April and it is happening to people I know right now.

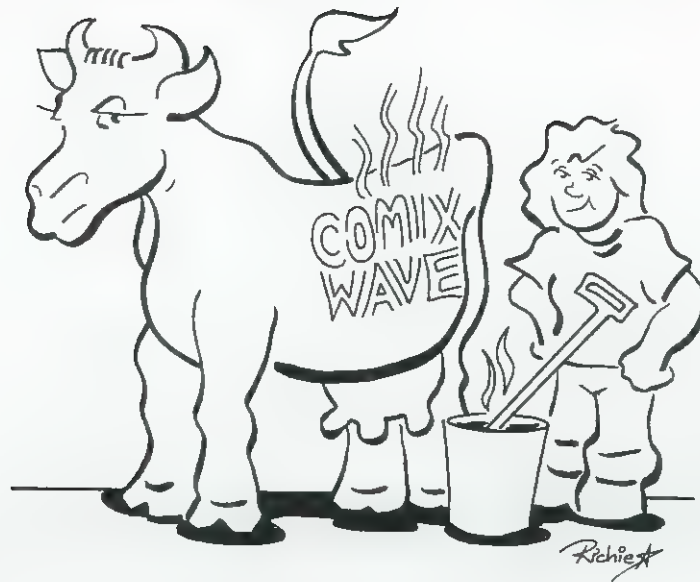
Driving, I found things about the same as Berkeley. The speed limit is roughly the same, though measured in Kilometers instead of miles. People ignore it. In the six days I spent in Victoria, I saw one cop. Berkeley has enough cops to police all of Canada.

I didn't hear any rap, thankfully. The trend seems to be sixties American. All over the radio, I heard the Mamas and Papas, the Stones, some country and Jazz, but very little black music. TV was about the same as in Berkeley, though the soap operas were done with more heavy accents. I had expected to hear more accents in Victoria, but the young people in the shops sound the same as Americans. I suspect the influence of TV. A few of the older people had more of a British dialect and I heard a few cockney voices.

The air was a lot clearer than Berkeley, but then Victoria doesn't have a giant chemical company pouring tons of poison shit into the air every night.

To return to the US we had to fly from Victoria to Port Angeles, then on to Seattle and back to Oakland. American customs is in Port Angeles. There is no john in the area so you have to go out to the airport lounge and back. There is a metal detector there. Well, we had all been through this in Victoria, so we hadn't been anywhere to get anything new to put in our bags, yet when the women went out to the john and returned, the woman who was running the metal detector stopped them and had them open their purses. I had to smile as I watched this routine. That woman was just snooping in those purses on a boring afternoon. Maybe she watched too many movies and had a fantasy going about some woman going to the head in Port Angeles, getting a gun from an accomplice who had rowed in from some other island, and trying to get it back to the customs area in her little purse. The metal checker would catch her in the act and bust her and become a national heroine.

There's a comic book story for someone. -Clay 6/12/93



COMIX PLUGOLA

FARMGIRL FUNNIES 7 is 50+ pp and **FARMBOY FUNNIES 8** is the same from Gina and Richie Prosch, 305 Pinehaven #44, Laurens SC 29360. Richie did the logo for this issue. His strip, *Open Range*, is running in **EDGE** magazine out of Greenville, SC. Richie told me about the recent ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder] scam. "Gina has a lot of trouble at the college with Freshmen who screw around for a semester, flunk her class, then hoist the flag of ADD in their defense. Yuppie parents who don't want to admit their kid might not be the sharpest tool in the shed [due in part no doubt to being shunted off to day-care and propped in front of a video screen] can now blame ADD. Once diagnosed, they pump the kid full of ritalin and Jr. becomes the perfect little Beaver Cleaver. I'm not saying there aren't actual cases of people who have the disorder and can benefit from the drugs, but it's just a little too trendy, and a little too convenient. Hooray for the Stepford Children."

Well, Richie, I'll say it for you. No kid benefits from drugs, particularly ritalin. ADDSCAM sounds like a good socio-psychological hustle. I'll bet a lot of shrinks are getting fat off it.

Rip off Press's new GP line of comics will be issued under the **MAGNECOM** logo. It was announced as **IGUANA**, but turns out someone already uses that logo.

CEREBUS 171 continues Dave Sim's Mothers and Daughters Series.

Due in September from Kitchen Sink, a 5 issue series of Berni Wrightson's **CAPTAIN STERNN**, incorporating his Heavy Metal work.

Julia Winograd's latest book of poetry is **PAPER TELEVISION**. Locally known as the bubble lady because she used to walk around People's Park and Telegraph Avenue blowing bubbles, Julia publishes one or two volumes of poetry each year. I always enjoy reading her poems because I know the places and often the people she is writing about. Each book is a slice of contemporary

life. Julie is always inquisitive, observant, direct, compassionate, and rarely obtuse or deliberately obscure. Observing the inaugural tv show she asks

What good does it do
for your country to own the whole world
If you lose your job
and nobody knows you're alive?

By mail, you can order Julia's books for \$5 pp from Zeitgeist Press, 4368 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, CA 94611.

CITY LIMITS GAZETTE is \$15 a year from Steve Willis, POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390. Steve wrote a nice intro to J. R. Williams collection **FUN HOUSE**. \$5.45 pp from Starhead Comix, POB 30044, Seattle, WA 98103.

WEIRDO 28 is on sale. Its title **VERRE D'EAU** resulted from a French mispronunciation of **WEIRDO**. Crumb's latest work is cynical, unfunny, and basically out of touch with the economic reality of our time. His six page diatribe about blacks and Jews is about as informed as the interior of the Cleveland parochial school mind circa 1949. Crumb has always used his art as a outlet for his hatred and prejudice, turning his pen from drooling hippies and facetious gurus to self-parody and ridicule. In the late sixties, it was funny, liberating, fresh, and painfully honest, but for an isolationist Crumb living in a little French town to thumb his nose at those who have stayed to struggle with the social problems in the America of the 1990's, his invective is neither funny nor witty; it's just reactionary to the max. What we have in **WEIRDO 28** is Aline and Robert Crumb gloating over their good fortune to be able to raise their daughter, Sophie, in the peace and safety of the French countryside while the rest of us have to worry about our children and grandchildren being victims of a drive-by shooting or an extended drug problem. Aline, in her story, admits her hypocrisy. Crumb just bitches and gripes. There is a lot of whining in the various stories in this issue, a lot of hyperbolic sarcasm, a lot of general nastiness, but that has been the *raison d'être* of this mag since it

started. In his two pages, Bill Griffith describes the casinos in Lake Tahoe as monuments to greed, but he goes inside and he probably spent his share of time at the machines off-panel. Anti-establishment cartoonists have it good in America, because they can draw and say what they please. Anyone ever see any anti-Egyptian comic books, any anti-Iranian comics drawn by Iranians, any anti-Israeli comics for sale in Jerusalem or Palestine?

The anti-establishment attitude of **WEIRDO** is almost quaint in its basic impotence. I think comic art has brought about a lot of changes since the earliest underground comix, but they have been internal changes, changes in the acceptable content of comic art, not social changes.

An SASE to Gary Usher will get you the latest copy of his **Public Domain Comics**. Gary is currently working on an index of **CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY**. 205 N.Vine St., Glenwood, IA 51534.

Did you know that Grasshopper consumption by humans and free-range chickens reduces pesticide use in The Phillipines? You would be informed of things like that if you read **THE FOOD INSECTS NEWSLETTER**. And, sorry I didn't tell you in time, but the Insect Club in Washington, DC, held their first Bourgeois Bug Tasting Event last February 15. A reviewer in the local paper gave it 1 1/2 stars. You can get a free copy of the Insects Newsletter by writing to the Department of Entomology, 1630 Linden Drive, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc 53706.

CLAY GEERDES COMIX WAVE 141

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P. O. Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved. Artwork and material herein ©the artists or writers involved and used here for promotional purposes only. \$11 for the next twelve issues. \$45 for a complete set of back issues. Checks to Clay Geerdes. MO's or cash, fine. CW began in October of 1973. This is the 20th anniversary issue!

Joe Zabel and Gary Dumm illustrated Harvey Pekar's **DANCING WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED**, the story of an outsider who tries to join a group and fails miserably at new age hipness. \$4.50 pp from Caliber Press, 621-B S. Main St., Plymouth, MI 48170. I think most people who are into comics are quasi-outsiders even when we get together. New agers cluster together and validate one another like parking receipts.

Wasn't **WILD PALMS** the worst piece of degenerate amoral pompous contemptible pseudo-tech dreck to date? If that tv series didn't end the careers of Oliver Stone and Jim Belushi, I don't know why not. The plot was pure brainless clod and watching a fine actor like Robert Loggia forced to say those shitty lines was torture beyond the pale. This rot rated second but declined as the boredom mounted. They should have called it **SON OF TWIN PEAKS** or **DEMONIC DAUGHTER OF BLUE VELVET**. Whether it's regular tv or high density tv or giant screen tv or holographic tv or tv in 3-D, it's goddamned tv, folks, and the viewer is immobilized the way the power structure likes him/her. I thought **WILD PALMS** would really get into electronic exploitation, stuff like Virtual Reality and Morphing, instead we get a rehash of demonic crapola with malevolent children brainwashed to off their parents and holographic Angie Dickenson choking her daughter to death on National TV. Hokum embellished with electronic gimmickry. Not even good soap op. Hated it, as you know who is prone to remark on **LIVING COLOR**, a show in decline, but one which still strikes a chord in me from time to time.

Film dementia is the latest phase in the boardrooms and penthouses where the rich compute their schemes to loot the mallies. It's all about demographics. Alienate everyone and diversify the market to increase sales of worthless, useless, and often dangerous rot. Did you watch the season ender of **SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE**? Kevin Kline doing fart jokes? What a bunch of no-talent bums. Call that writing? Even the laugh track couldn't save that dogshit. Did you



really need the money and ego-boo that bad, Kline?

THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

There were three islands, Grand Cayman, Little Cayman, and Cayman Brac. The two smaller ones were sparsely populated and seldom visited. Grand Cayman had eighteen thousand people, twelve thousand registered corporations and three hundred banks. The population was twenty percent white, twenty percent black and the other sixty percent wasn't sure and didn't care. Georgetown, the capital, in recent years had become an international tax haven with bankers as secretive as the Swiss. There were no income taxes, corporate taxes, capital gains taxes, estate or gift taxes. Certain companies and investments were given guarantees against taxation for fifty years. The islands were a dependent British territory and an unusually stable government. Revenue from import duties and tourism funded whatever government was necessary. There was no crime or unemployment.

John Grisham
THE FIRM, 1991

With **#586**, Gladstone resumed publication of **WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES**. The Disney Company botched it. Too dumb to know where the market was. They didn't even have the books on sale in their mall stores!

Don't miss Hilary Barta's great parody of McFarland's **SPAWN** in **STUPID** #1. Barta did a wonderful job on **PLASTIC MAN** for DC a couple of years ago but the company was too stupid to keep the title going. Jack Cole's PM was always more interesting and innovative than **SUPERMAN** and with the new computer technology that has been demonstrated in films like **TERMINATOR 2** a great PM film could be made, but don't hold your breath. If you don't see **STUPID** in your local store, you can write to Image and beg for their catalog, 2400 E. Katella, Suite 1065, Anaheim, CA 92806. Though why anyone would locate an office on Katella is beyond me. Last time

I was down there, it took me half an hour to get across Katella because of the Disneyland traffic. How do the employees stand the stress?

Meanwhile, in **SPAWN** 10, Cerebus goes around saying I am not Spawn over and over again. We know, Dave. We know, Dave. We know, Dave.

TESTY MAGAZINE 1 is out from Michael Stengl. \$3 pp for the pilot copy of this mag which combines prose, poetry, and some good cartooning. POB 568 Trinidad, CA 95570.

A buck for postage will get you a copy of Dr. Anderson's **ELLIOTT THE GIGANTALOEPE**, a DZ. POB 987, Campbell, CA 95009. Great cat joke on the back page, Doc.

Classic Music Played In 7-Eleven Store

Sacramento

South Sacramento 7-Eleven store owner Kevin Woo has a high-brow cure for loitering — classical music piped into the parking lot.

The sound of Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Verdi is keeping teens away and Woo and neighbors happy. Police say nighttime gatherings of teens outside the 7-Eleven had become a serious neighborhood problem.

Associated Press

HERBIE has returned. The Fat Fury is back in a new series from Dark Horse, but, sad to say, the stories are reactionary and just downright stoopid. The lead story is called "The most beautiful Mom in the world," and John Byrne wrote it, though why he would want his name on it is beyond me. This is an old cliché-ridden sitcom plot wherein Mom becomes a model and leaves Dad and Herbie at home to try to cope with the housework [if it sounds like Mr. Mom, you're tuned in to the right channel, but I remember it as *Lucy Makes A Commercial* [1952], source for **THE THRILL OF IT ALL** with Doris Day as Mom, 1963]. Herbie and Pop can only function by getting Mom back in the kitchen where Byrne clearly thinks she belongs. Save your \$2.50. This unenlightened sexist crapola insults anyone with even a trace of intelligence. Herbie fans will be glad to know subsequent issues will contain a lot of the Ogden Whitney originals reprinted.





CLAY GEERDES COMIX WAVE 142

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ANOTHER LOOK IN WALT'S VAULT

Lots of reviews about Marc Eliot's book about Walt Disney as Hollywood's Dark Prince in local Bay Area papers. The book was killed by Bantam in 1991 and if you're interested in the way conglomerates are controlling the earth these days see Jon Wiener's article "Murdered Ink," in **THE NATION**, May 31, 1993. The product is all to big corporations and anything and everything is done to protect it, including killing any critical book. The Disney Company controls through licensing. They say through licensing a book about an aspect of the company they can check and make sure the facts are correct. They get to see the manuscript and approve everything before it goes to press. So why did Bantam drop Eliot's bio of Walt? The company has a big Disney contract that might have been in jeopardy. Is anything more sacred than the Disney image? What if Sinead O'Connor had torn a picture of Mickey Mouse or, horrors, Walt himself, in half on Saturday Night Live? Would she ever eat lunch in that town again?

I haven't read Eliot's book yet so I can only react to what has been passed along second hand by various writers, but it looks like the writer did a hatchet job a la Kitty Kelley. It's my feeling that Walt Disney, whatever his personal failings, did a lot more good for everyone than evil. I enjoyed all the early animated cartoons and features. Grew up with them. I know they exist because Disney was strong enough to keep the company together long enough to make them. Anyone who thinks **SNOW WHITE** would have been what it is without Walt is mistaken. He held the studio together and kept hundreds of people employed during the worst depression this country ever experienced. It was Walt who conceived and created Disneyland, no one else. Now there are those who have not seen **SNOW WHITE** or been to Disneyland and care nothing about animation or fantasy and they have their reward, but for those of us who love the art and the fantasy and enjoy annual visits to Disneyland or

Disney World, Walt has a special place in our thought. I have read all the books about him to date and I know as much as anyone about his life and work and when I see someone like Eliot saying absurd and insulting things in print I have to reply. Most of it sounds like bullshit to me. Disney an FBI informant? I doubt that Walt had any more contact with J. Edgar Hoover than Shirley Temple or Elvis Presley. Hoover was a celebrity hound and he got his picture taken with anyone who was in the limelight. Walt was a workaholic, putting in 16 or more hours a day at his Hollywood studio. Animation is long hard work. When was Walt supposed to be doing all this spying on Hoover? Walt an illegitimate child? Then how is it he looks just like his Dad, Elias? Look at the photos. He and Roy both look like their dad.

I think what bothers me about this biography is the same thing that bugs me about a lot of the things that are being written about creative people these days. *The publishers are too goddamned lazy to check the facts and too eager to put anything and everything sensational into print so they can rake in the profits.* Truth doesn't mean anything to them. Writers like Kitty Kelley make up intimate conversations between real people, conversations they could not possibly know, and present them to the public as the real thing. Tabloid lies have moved into the book industry. Sure, writers lie. When a writer claims he interviewed 3 or 4 THOUSAND!! people I know s/he's a liar. I've been a working writer for over thirty years and I doubt that I have interviewed more than a few hundred people and only some of these in depth. What a joke. Some of these people put out a book in two years and make those absurd claims. There are only 365 days in a year. Am I supposed to believe there are writers who can interview three or four people a day every day of the year? Bullshit. It takes two or three weeks to set up an interview with someone who is known and that person is often on a PR campaign for a book or film or their press rep says No.

You have to be careful when writing about real people, particularly if they are still alive. If you quote someone else's quote you don't now the original was correct. Well, *he said he said*--no sale.

Lady Chatterly's LOVER

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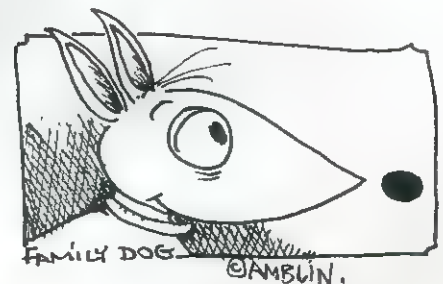
Each fact has to be checked with a note or a phone call and few people take the time to do this. Deadline pressure prevails and what goes to print is more often fiction than fact.

I'm not uncritical of the Disney world. The kid in me loves all that crap, while the adult says, yes, but look at this sexist practice and that reactionary social attitude and where are the Asian and Black people, etc. Nor am I naive about Walt. He was as human as the rest of us. He drank. He chain-smoked. He drove his employees. He got revenge against those who went on strike against him in the early forties. He was a master at the game of capitalism and he was one of America's biggest success stories. Had he been a failure, we wouldn't be talking about him. A writer like Eliot would have no incentive to attack him and try to assassinate his character.

I appreciate what Walt Disney did. He shared his ideas with everyone. His studio produced the best animation and set the standard for everyone else. I've always had a good time in Disneyland, even those times when I've written satirical articles about it. I saw Walt one time. It was in 1956. He was walking down Main Street with a couple of businessmen. The people walking nearby weren't paying any attention to him. I was in uniform. Just another sailor walking toward Tomorrowland to listen to Gladys's Knight and the Pips who were scheduled to perform that afternoon.

FAMILY DOG

When I saw the first **FAMILY DOG**, one of the **AMAZING STORIES** series, a couple of years back, I laughed all the way through. A great cartoon. Inspired. But the **FAMILY DOG** series is more than disappointing; it is a slow-paced dud, a total bore. I didn't laugh once during the first two episodes. *Dog Days of Summer* opened with a nice dream sequence of flying dogs, but it went on too long and lacked clarity. Whose idea was it not to attach the nose to the dog? Very stupid. Looks like he's pushing a turd around onscreen. In *Party Animal* the Bart Simpson clone burns down the family home. This is funny? Seen in an area where over 3,500 homes burned in a fire storm, this cartoon is in the worst taste I can imagine. The house is burning down and the parents stand around making wisecracks? Firemen ridiculed and acting like clods. A woman trying to save the living room carpet in a burning house. A father whose only thought is to get his laz-e-boy out on the lawn. Get real. This shit is insulting and stupid. The crew is advised to go back and study **GERALD McBOING BOING** and the other UPA cartoons from which this style is derived.





© Jim Siergey

Vincent T. Hamlin

C-19-93

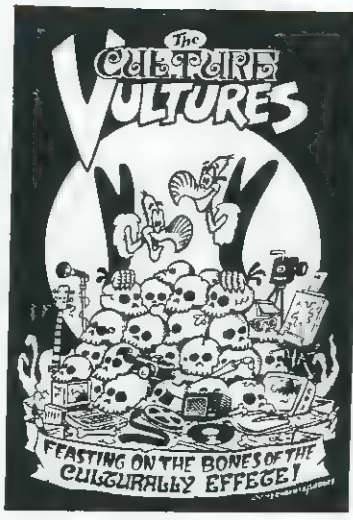
Spring Hill, Fla.

Vincent T. Hamlin, who created the popular cartoon strip "Alley Oop" after he had been thrown out of art class, died Monday. He was 83.

Alley Oop, a mesomorphic caveman, rode into the comics astride Dinny the dinosaur nearly 60 years ago. He still appears in 700 newspapers around the world, with Oola, his heartthrob, as well as King Guz, Queen Umpateedie, Grand Vizier Foozy and other inhabitants of the Kingdom of Moo.

Mr. Hamlin, who also had worked as a newspaper reporter and photographer, retired from "Alley Oop" in 1971, when Dave Graue took over the strip. He was joined by another cartoonist, Jack Bender, last year.

New York Times



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Cedric Shabazz and Roger Bates told reporter Lisa Stone-Norman that Ice-T stole their idea after they gave him some of their **BLACK SAVIOR** comic books at an Oakland concert, September 12, 1992. They allege the cover of Ice-T's **HOME INVASION** album is too similar to the concept of **BLACK SAVIOR**. Looks like a legal battle coming up. [See Oakland **TRIBUNE**, 7/28/93, p. B-5.]

Southeby's got \$82.5 mil for Van Gogh's *Portrait of Dr. Gachet* and 26.8 mil for Cezanne's *Still Life With Apples* this year. That's in case you were curious about what the rich do with their money.

It's now a misdemeanor to go naked in Berkeley. For the past year or so we have been treated with the nudeness of several people from a theater company, most of them past the prime of youth and lacking in the aesthetics department. The nude thing began with a young guy named Martinez who took off his clothes in Sproul Plaza on the UC campus and began to attend his classes in the altogether. Police learned they could only arrest him if someone complained. So he strolled around town and made the news and became famous as the Naked Guy. Alas, he is now performing an illegal act and must keep his shorts on. So far, however, he has ignored the law and no one has bothered him. He did go to court once and when he showed up naked the judge found him in contempt but he was only reprimanded. Santa Rita is full of drug cases and there is no room for a local nudist. I think people who are bothered by nudity should take baths with their clothes on and shave blindfolded. They always talk about the kids. Kids aren't bothered by nude people. They just giggle. To my knowledge, there is very little crime in nudist camps and way too much of it in cities where everyone is dressed to the teeth.

WE ARE THE WEIRD is no longer. Joe Bob Briggs calls his zine **THE JOE BOB REPORT** now. \$3 from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. The latest issue discusses Rue McClanahan's early sex movies **5 MINUTES TO LOVE** and **HOLLYWOOD AFTER DARK**. She played a junkyard nymphomaniac. Even Golden Girls get the blues. Joe Bob is on Fox tv now. Check out **FRONT PAGE** on your local channel.

President 7/31/93 thanks boy for rescuing him in comic

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YORKTOWN, N.Y. — Move over Superman. Here comes Bodyman, the creation of a 6-year-old boy whose latest exploit is saving President Clinton from a dastardly plot.

Christopher Sarro proudly displayed a thank you letter Thursday from Clinton.

The story features Christopher's regular evildoers, the Fear-some Force, which includes Polluter, Smoker, Al K. Hall, Lex Liquor and Stranger.

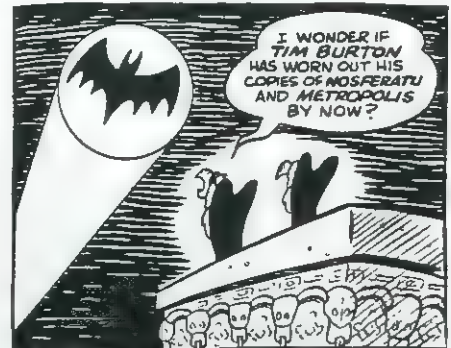
The plot is to kidnap Clinton and turn the world into a place where kindergartners are allowed to use drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, and to litter and pollute.

But Bodyman, his muscles bulging through his green outfit with a big yellow B on the chest, saves the day. His main power source is love, Christopher said, but he never goes anywhere without a banana or carrot on his hip.

On June 1, Christopher sent a letter and a video of himself displaying his colored comic to Clinton. "Don't worry, Mr. President. You get saved," Christopher said on the tape.

In a letter dated July 14, Clinton thanked him and urged him to help create a better future by "working hard in school, avoiding drugs, protecting the environment and treating others with respect."

The Culture Vultures have their own book. More of the wit and humor of Tom Roberts and Jim Siergey. See their ad this issue.



© Jim Siergey

Employee's comic book skewers postal officials

Aug 3 '93

WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — Last November, when Susan J. Zapolski, a research analyst at Postal Service headquarters, lost her job in the agency's massive reorganization, she went into a "complete depression and demoralization."

"I was very angry, frustrated that our story wasn't being told," she said last week.

After two months of anguish, Zapolski took pen in hand and began to draw.

Every night at her Arlington, Va. home, Zapolski would draw.

When Zapolski finally put her pen down early this summer, she had completed a 50-page comic book that savaged Postmaster

General Marvin T. Runyon and his top aides for the way they implemented "their dastardly scheme to downsize the Postal Service."

Published under the name "Zap Comics," her book — "The Truth Behind the Reorganization" — has become something of a bestseller, an underground sensation among postal workers.

Postal officials, however, are taking the animation in stride.

"We view the comic book as a satirical effort, full of exaggeration and fiction," said postal spokesman Frank Brennan.

"I don't know of anyone who took it that serious. It generated a few smiles."



THE AMERICAN COMIC BOOK IS 60!

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the American comic book. It was in 1933 that Max Gaines got the idea to reprint the Sunday pages in a 36 page book. He sold the idea to Proctor and Gamble and COMICS ON PARADE was given away to customers. The idea was so successful that Gaines kept it up. He bounced from company to company for nearly twenty years before passing on in the late forties to leave his company to his son, William Maxwell Gaines. Bill got out of Bible Stories and into horror tales. Entertaining Comics [EC] made a big splash for about four years, then caved in to the Comics Code of 1954. The early comic books were filled with strip art and newspaper characters, but the success of the reprint books lead to regularly produced comic books. Most of the stories and art for these came from teenagers like Jerome Siegel and Joseph Schuster, a couple of Cleveland boys who came up with a variation on Philip Wylie's *Gladiator* which they called *Superman*. The success of the comic book as we know it today dates from June 1, 1938, when the first *Superman* story appeared in *Action Comics* #1. *Batman* followed in *Detective* 27 [1939] and we were destined to follow the careers of a lot of weird superpeople out of the Great Depression and into the boom times that came with World War 2.

Aside from the appeal of a superhero to young boys sadly lacking muscles, *Superman* offered a lot of symbolic satisfaction to the adult male who suffered misery and deprivation in the Depression thirties. While regular folks died routinely in drive-by shootings committed by bootleggers like Al Capone, bullets bounced off the inflated chest of *Superman*. While many suffered poor vision as a result of malnutrition, *Superman* not only saw perfectly, his x-ray vision could see right through walls.

Well, *Superman* was an absurd character from day one, but his abilities appeal on many levels or he would not have survived any longer than many of his forties clones. Today's superheroes have carried absurdity further and further. *Superman* could appear almost normal with a blue suit and a pair of glasses, but characters like *The Savage Dragon* and the *Cyber Force* gang have left normality behind. All of the new generation of

superheroes and villains are otherworldly. Oh, they spout contemporary jargon in their fumetti and there is a near normal moment here and there, but most of these beings and the comic worlds they inhabit are complete fantasy. Battles are constant and highly stylized. The artists cover up for lack of story with panels blown up to full page, even double page. Jack Kirby's best splashes used to make a dramatic point, but the technique has been trivialized through constant repetition and has become a blatant cliché in titles like *SPAWN* and *SHADOW HAWK*.

Where I used to read comic books as a kid, I look at them now, because there is little to read. Story is lost or obscured by art. There is little balance between the two. Characters are so overly embellished that any resemblance to human beings is lost. No one could actually walk around or function in the costumes drawn by Todd McFarlane and Mike Lee. I think these guys played with those Japanese robots that became popular in the seventies.

There may be stories buried under this obscure art, but what do they amount to? Vaguely rehashed movie scenarios? In the sixties, it was hip to invent band names like *Mad River*, *Moby Grape*, *Sopwith Camel*, *The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band*, *Jefferson Airplane*, but nearly all of these bands played the same kind of music. Guitars and drums prevailed and the beat was somewhere between blues and rock. Today, the same trend is manifest in comics. It is now hip to rename superheroes, give them new costumes, and present them as something new. Indeed, there are companies called *New Comics* and *Innovation*, but renaming *Captain America* *Superpatriot* is just putting old wine in a new bottle. You can trot *Sergeant Rock* out wearing a tutu and he's still the same macho warrior fighting a war that ended decades ago.

The only thing really new in today's comics is the quality of the physical product. The covers are on heavier stock and the guts are printed on high quality book paper. The package looks good and comics have always sold on the basis of their garish covers. These books run from \$1.95-\$4.95 and the printers and publishers are making a bundle off all that glossy cardboard. Sure, the books will outlast the old ones run on newsprint, but what will the collector have? I find a lot of blatant dishonesty in these new books. Lots of promise but little delivery. Way too many pin-ups and

ads. In one issue of *BRIGADE*, I counted 24 pages of art, which means 12 pages of ads, mostly in-house ads for other characters and their books. Of those 24 pages, there are far too many blown-up panels and splashes, few of them justified by the momentum of the story. Just as *Marvel* and *DC* began to cheat the reader and collector with the numbering system, independent studios and companies are following suit. They even resort to 0 issues to pad the income. To my knowledge, the first 0 issue in comic history was published by Robert Crumb. The only reason for this was his loss of the art for an early issue. When he got that art back from the editor of *YARROWSTALKS*, he had already published a couple of issues of *ZAP* with Don Donahue under the *Apex Novelties* logo. The *Print Mint* published the rediscovered art as *ZAP 0*. Why are we suddenly getting all these 0 issues? Why an *X-O Man of War 0*? The reader buys a title in good faith, assuming it will continue only to find that the story he was following is now continued in another title so he is forced to buy that title. This is cheating as far as I am concerned. I resent it and I suspect other collectors do as well. I resent the constant renumbering, the manipulation of the reader market with phony mini-series. The "Death" of *Superman* was totally bullshit in my book. A rip off from word one. Manipulating colors and covers is just cheating the reader who likes to think he has a complete collection. When Jay Kennedy assembled the first edition of his *Underground and Newwave Price Guide* back in 1983, he listed all of the colors of paper I had used to print some of the mini-comix in my series. I had to smile about that, because to me it was all xerox and whatever paper I had was used to print the next title that came in. I thought about getting one sheet of each shade at the copy shop [at least fifty different colors] and running a mini. This would mean that Jay, in order to have a complete collection, would have to buy the entire run of the minicomic. To me, it would have been a gag like the time I did a cherry, lemon, and lime issue of *COMIX WORLD* to go with *Byron Werner's Coca-cola* logo.

It's not a joke at Malibu and some of the other companies that are charging ridiculous prices for die-cut covers on repetitive superhero comics. In the 60th year of comic books, what has happened? I got 64 pages of comic stories for a dime as a kid. Today I get a third of that for \$2.95. With all the advertising in contemporary comics, the prices should be lower, not higher.

-Clay Geerdes, 10/93

Kevin Brady, one of the original *PANDEMONIUM EXPRESS* gang who revived the spirit of individual comics and stimulated the new wave of minicomic, is back on the scene. He calls his outfit *Mosquito Gulch Studio* and you can write him at POB 104, Glencoe, CA 95232.

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BABY SUE Vol. 4, #2. \$2.00 pp from POB 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111. In this issue, Sue reveals a darker side of Smokey the Bear. DZ.

J. R. Williams sent me the first issue of **I LIKE COMICS**, a new fanzine edited by Peter HATE Bagge. Interviews with folks like Jim Woodring, Julie Doucet, Dennis Eichhorn, Mary Fleener [who has a new **SLUTBURGER** out], and even some inside stuff on Crabbman, not to mention Gary Groth. \$6 pp from Pat **BIG MOUTH** Moriarty, 6919 19th Ave. Seattle, WA 98117.

The Disney Company has altered some of the racist lyrics on **ALADDIN**, but the film is still unlikely to go down well in the Arab-American community. **TIME** [Nov. 9, 1992, p. 74 ff] ran a puff-piece on the film and didn't seem to notice either the sexism or the racism.

Chris Bors is back on the scene and you can get a copy of his **ANIMATION ALMANAC** for \$1 pp. 121 Texas Lane, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Steve "Dog boy" Lafler is profiled in the latest issue of **CITY LIMITS GAZETTE**.



Please Write!

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TERRY LABAN
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SAN FRANCISCO WEEKLY featured an article on Peter Bagge by Gary Wolf. V. XII, No. 27, pp. 10-11. The focus was on Bagge's **HATE** characters with some analysis and a few references to experiences from the recent **HATE/BALL** tour. Bagge's art was on the cover of SFW.

Those doing research on Valiant characters will want the **VALIANT READER**. Written by Anthony Bedard, the **READER** puts all of the Valiant characters into historical perspective. Now I know who **SHADOW MAN** is and what **HARBINGER** is all about, but I still fail to understand why the early issues are so expensive.

The tour book for **Extreme Studios TOUR '93** is an item historians will want to collect since it contains photos and bios on folks like Rob Liefeld. If you've seen the lines at recent cons, you know these guys are the wave of the future. Liefeld is the creator of **YOUNGBLOOD**, which appears under the image logo.

RABBITBOY 4 is \$1 pp from Bruce Stengl, 633 King St, Apt. #13, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

The panels scattered about this issue are reasons you ought to check out Terry Laban's **CUD**, one of the funniest satirical comics of the nineties. I loved Laban's primitive look at Archie.

CEREBUS 173 continues the **MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS** series.

From **THE JOE BOB REPORT** of September 6, 1993, I learn that the sequel to **EASY RIDER** is still in the wind. It should stay that way. I saw the original again recently and it did not have staying power for me. Sequels to thrillers like **LETHAL WEAPON** and **DIE HARD** are logical, even fun, because the stunt crew one-ups what they did and it's techno-crapola to the max, but **EASY RIDER** made its point and the main character was killed. You can get a **JOE BOB REPORT** of your very own for \$3 from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.

Robert Williams talks about how he got into **ZAP** and how he is now making the New York fine art scene with his fantasy paintings in **THE COMICS JOURNAL** 161.

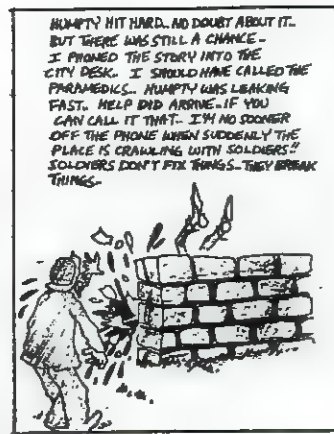


TALES OF HELPLESS ANGER 1 is \$3.75 pp from Tom Roberts, 333 S. East Ave., #209, Oak Park, IL 60302. The cover is by Jeff Siergey. A comic with a certain degree of social consciousness.

JOWLY ROGER
THE PIRATE OF
PIGPENZANCE SEZ...

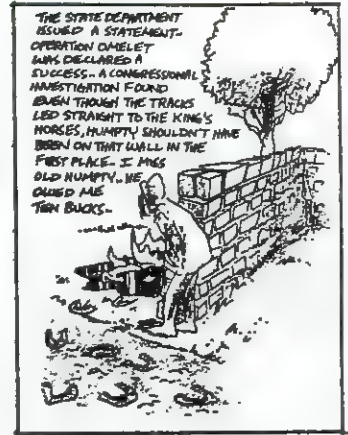
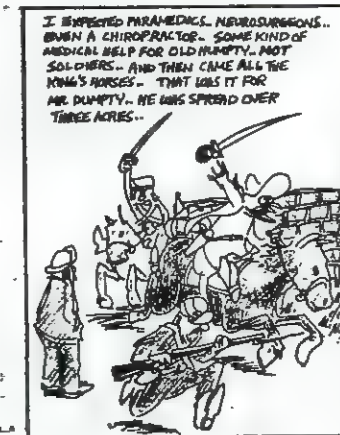


NOBODY NOSE THE TRUFFLES
I'VE SEEN, EXCEPT...
CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE



O'Neill

82 October 27, 1993 San Francisco Bay Guardian



Clay Geerdes COMIX WAVE 144
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THE PARODY LINGERS ON

Which reminds me that Justin Green was the original Dog Boy. There is a four-pager of his in the latest **YOUNG LUST** [#8] for which Dan Clowes did the cover. Inside you get to see Bill Griffith's Zippy without his mumu on. Ah, yes, it seems Zippy does have a sex life and he practices it when he is not making up lines for the booboisie. CUD cartoonist Terry Laban is in this issue and Jay Kinney broke me up with his 90's legal protocol. Carol Lay's great illustrated poem about panty raids made me chuckle, too. I remember those from 1954 at the University of Nebraska. My friends and I drove up there at night and watched some of these raids. Great entertainment. By the way, **YOUNG LUST** is 23 years old and from the looks of Zippy and Claude Funston it ought to be called **OLD LUST**.



NINETIES FOREPLAY by Kinney ©

DO YOU MIND PROVIDING PROOF OF A NEGATIVE HIV TEST BEFORE WE ENGAGE IN CONSENSUAL SEX BETWEEN ADULTS?

NOT AT ALL, SWEETHEART— ESPECIALLY IF YOU SIGN THIS PRE-COITAL AGREEMENT RELEASING ME FROM LIABILITY DAMAGES SHOULD YOU BECOME PREGNANT FROM BIRTH-CONTROL DEVICE FAILURE...

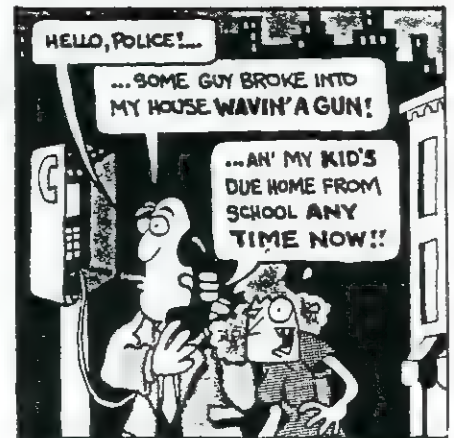




Once a cartoonist, always a...

Skip Williamson can't stop drawing comic books and he's just done **PIGHEAD 1**. In this one you get to see Sammy Smoot, an authentic heterosexual male, confronted by Oprah Winfrey on her talk show. I've spread a few panels around this page to give you a preview of the flavor. \$3.95 pp from Skip at 435 S. Home Ave., Oak Park, IL 60302.

Rip Off Press is going to publish a six issue series of Dan O'Neill's comic strips. These have appeared in the **BAY GUARDIAN** the past couple of years. The book is called **O'NEILL**. ROP's 800-HOT-COMX.



UNDERGROUND COMIX SHOW

The art show **COMIC POWER: UNDERGROUND/ INDEPENDENT COMIX USA**, will be at Massachusetts College of Art, Jan 20-Feb. 20, 1994; Vancouver Art Gallery in BC, April 15-June 15, and at the Dunlop Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, July 7-Sept. 18, 1994. The show was organized by John Carlin and Carlo McCormick.

CEREBUS 174 continues Dave Sim's "Mothers and Daughters" series. Nice picture of Dave and his gang on the back cover.

Dark Horse is continuing Matt Wagner's **GRENDAL TALES**, some grim stuff in that second issue. Chris Claremont is writing the **ALIENS/PREDATOR** series for Dark Horse.

Richie Prosch tells me Blackbird Comics is going to reprint his Open Range strips in a comic book soon.

I had a nice visit with Marc Myers and Clark Dissmeyer in Lincoln in October. Clark was interviewed in a recent issue of CLG and Gary Usher has done a bibliographic study of his early minicomix work. Marc and Clark got to experience **DEMOLITION MAN** with us, a nice parody of Wells' **TIME MACHINE** and Huxley's **BRAVE NEW WORLD**. There was a lot of good writing in this film, but many of the lines will be lost beneath the overlay of violence that dominates this type of action film. Realism, it's not, and I am not sure how well it works as fantasy since it is nearly impossible to identify with any of the characters. Watching a couple of superbeings fight is on a par with watching a bulldozer on a construction site.

CAMEL ADVENTURES is a nice DZ by Jimmy Almen and others. Write to him at Granlidsvagen 14, 172 35 Sundbyberg, SWEDEN.





TOILET AESTHETICS

The Berkeley Inn burned and was condemned by the City and the building was demolished by wrecking ball and the ruins became People's Park Annex for a short while, a Hooverville, a tent city for the homeless, then the landlord had the squatters kicked off by the cops and an iron fence put up to ensure the safety of the lot, but upon those ruins rose one of the strangest museums in Berkeley's checkered history. At first there were only a few old television tubes out there, then a few toilet bowls and a shopping cart or two, but soon there were more toilet bowls and piles of toilet seats, all of them painted with orange and green day-glo and embellished with poetry and aphorisms. By November of 1993, the corner of Haste and Telegraph had become a cage of toilet art, a New Sense Museum, a tribute to marginality and absurdism. After all, what could be more appropriate than yuppies sitting in the window of the Intermezzo coffeehouse eating their salads and croutons while gazing across the street at a sea of pink and orange toilets? A landscape broken only by the passing of students, lawyers, cops on bicycles, panhandlers, and an occasional activist or politico on the way to People's Park. All gone now. All those toilet bowls and tanks and seats and old shopping carts were missing by early December, just in time for the shopping season. An empty fenced-in mudhole once again. We'll never know who hoisted all those day-glo toilets over the fence in the middle of the night, but Julia Winograd will probably have a poem about it in her next book of poetry. Some things never change around here.

Clay Geerdes **COMIX WAVE 145**
©1993. POB 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved. Artwork and material herein © the artists concerned and used here for promotional purposes only. \$12 for the next 12 issues. \$50 for a complete set of back issues. Checks to Clay Geerdes. Cash or MOs fine.

If you're dying to see what Berkeley's naked guy looks like in the flesh, you can get a copy of the **1994 Telegraph Avenue Street Calendar** from Bruce Duncan, c/o BEFP, 2362 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704. \$12 pp. The cover features a group of naked activists walking down the Avenue followed by photographers. Andy Martinez, the naked guy, climbed into national fame by climbing out of his clothes--that's all it takes to become famous in contemporary America?? This important event got coverage all over and I expected to hear about copycat stripping on campuses from the University of Nebraska to Notre Dame. Locally, Andy triggered changes in campus rules and a new ordinance in the Berkeley Municipal Code.

Seems a couple of guards found a Barbie doll, enhanced it a bit with some public hair and nipples and left it in another guard's space at Sandia National Laboratories. A female guard saw it, found it threatening, turned her fellow guard in for sexual harassment and guess what? The guy was fired. He is now having to sue to get his job back! The two who resexed Barbie got only reprimands. The moral of this story? Don't play with dolls? Don't let a woman catch you playing with dolls? Beware of sexually enhancing Barbie dolls? No matter how boring your job is, keep humor out of the workplace and be particularly serious and businesslike when a woman is present? All of the above?

Did you see **MORT THE DEAD TEENAGER?** Marvel started the title in 1993 and this is the first time a male underground cartoonists has made the transition to Marvel. Trina worked on Wonder Woman for a few issues. Gary Hallgren, who developed Mort for Larry Hama's script, has come a long way since his days in the Air Pirates studio back in the early seventies. Take a look at **MORT**. I think you're enjoy it.

Bernie Mireault's **THE JAM** continues in issue 6 from Dark Horse. 10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukee, Oregon 97222. \$3.25 pp. Ask for a list of their comics. Also from Dark Horse, **Grendel Tales 4**.

I just read an article about political correctness in the comic strips, all about the way people write in to protest the gags of Mort Walker and other cartoonists. Well, so what? Underground comix were never politically correct and none of the real comix ever will be. How can anyone be honest and maintain political correctness? Paul Krassner, editor of **THE REALIST**, just finished a tour promoting his autobiography. He did an hour and a half show at Ashkenaz in Berkeley on November 7th and I was there to hear him start off with a routine about political correctness. Like many stand-up comedians, Krassner's humor is often self-directed. He gets a lot of mileage out of his experiences as a satirist among the hippies and yuppies of yesterday. I see the whole PC trip as hypocrisy in action. What is it, after all, but image maintenance? When Jesse Jackson made a reference to *Hymietown* a few years back, he was saying what he really thought. Trying to cover it up later by saying *what he really meant* was didn't fool anyone anymore than government references to lethal weapons as peacekeepers. There was a brief period in the sixties and early seventies when underground newspapers

told people what was happening and called the corporate propaganda what it was, promo for the capitalist product, but reality did not survive that period and we no longer have a viable underground press as an antidote to megamedia lies.

How can a cartoonist be true to his vision and be politically correct? When Lynn Johnson dealt with gay teenagers in her strip, she found herself cancelled from a lot of papers and she got a lot of mail. Mort Walker has the general flirting with his secretary and a couple of women walk out on his presentation at the San Diego Comic Convention. I find these absurd reactions. Mainly because comic characters are not real. They are figments of a cartoonist's imagination and it doesn't matter whether they look like dressed-up mice or costumed superheroes and heroines, they are still fantasy, not reality. What difference does it make if Brenda Starr is a woman when she does the same thing a male reporter would do? Her female biology is not dealt with in the strip. There are people who would argue that Brenda Starr is PC because it is done by a woman artist. I don't buy that. There are a lot of memorable women characters in the world of comics and most of them were created by male artists. Why was Wonder Woman accepted as an authentic character and put on the cover of the second issue of *Ms. Magazine* in 1972 when WW was invented by William Moulton Marsten as a female version of Superman? Lois Lane, who--surprise!--had her own title for nearly 20 years from 1958 to the mid-seventies, was a far more interesting and complex character than Wonder Woman. I wasn't surprised to see that Lois survived the Salkind series of mega-Superman films in the eighties to get top billing in the new Lois and Clark tv series. A lot more can be made out of a writer like Lois than a collection of gimmicks like Wonder Woman.

I've never been convinced that there was a concentrated conscious effort made to keep women out of the comics business. Seems to me that the women who really wanted to get in, and had the talent and skills necessary, got in. I'm thinking of Grace Drayton, Tarpé Mills, Marie Severin, Gladys Parker, Marge Henderson Beull, and countless others. When underground comix began, most of them were done by men, but women got in when they wanted to. Those who were willing to follow the pattern and do their own books went as far with them as most of the men. It was not a business in which cartoonists were destined to become wealthy. The only way I know one can make a lot of money with cartoons is to have a widely syndicated strip. A handful of young cartoonists are making big money with certain comic book ideas right now, but will this continue? Who knows?

I'm a little more than bugged with the whole PC trip. I think things were a lot healthier when cartoonists kicked out the jams and drew anything they felt like drawing, let it all hang out. Fuck the taboos. All fantasies out in the open where they can be dealt with. When Crumb was criticized by feminists, he created Devil Girl and had Mr. Natural do all kinds of violent and gross things to her, a plausible reaction; after all, in underground comix, if you weren't violating all the taboos and resisting any kind of repression you weren't living up to the Code, which for many was to reverse all the tenets of the Comics Code Authority of 1954.

PC is the new taboo.



Clark Dissmeyer strikes again with two new four-page minis. **PAINFUL SCIENCE FICTION STORIES 1** and **SNORTIN' SORCERY**. Clark must be catching up on the comic trends of the early seventies. Gary Usher has nearly completed an extensive profile and bibliography of early newaver Clark D. which should be in print somewhere soon. Send Clark a buck at 2313 Central, #7, Kearney, NE 68847 and get in on this new brain rot.



I got a lot of laughs out of Diane DiMassa's **HOTHEAD PAISAN; HOMICIDAL LESBIAN TERRORIST #12**. You didn't even know there was one issue, huh? I found this one in a magazine store in Berkeley, not a comic book store. So shame on you guys for letting this one get away. Men do not fare well in this comic, but then did we fare all that well in Crumb or other comic books? Depends on your point of view. Hothead Paisan likes to kick male butt the way Crumb used to spank female butt and she obviously delights in cartooning it all. There is a large paperback book collection of the early PAISAN strips, so you can become an addict. Meanwhile, you can get the latest issue for \$3.52 pp from Giant Ass Publishing, POB 214, New Haven, CT 06502. She'll send you a free catalog. Nice to see women publishing their own comic books in contrast to those who take their stuff to male publishers then run on publicly about how feminist they are.

Last Gasp has published a complete collection of R. Crumb and Aline Kominsky-Crumb's **DIRTY LAUNDRY**. There were two issues of this title done in 1977. Aline told **THE COMICS JOURNAL** the book happened when she was laid up with a broken ankle. Crumb got her started on it. They communicated through the artwork and the project was unique in comic history. I know of no other jam like it.

Rip Off Press has survived. It is currently operated as a mail order company out of Auburn, California. Send a couple of bucks to Kathe Todd for Rip Off's latest publications. **POB 4686, Auburn 95604**.

Di Schutz is editing the **ALIENS/PREDATOR** series from Dark Horse.

Bruce Stengl sent me a copy of **RABBIT BOY 5**. The entire series is available from Bruce. \$1 each or \$5 for the set. 633 King St., Apt. 13, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

O. J. Simpson's real name? Orinthal James Simpson. You need to know things like that.

Commercials are showing up on videocassettes now and to those putting that rot on the tapes I promise to boycott any product advertised therein. When I buy or rent a video I pay for the show and I resent any commercial intrusion on my life. It's bad enough to have to sit through hours of ads for unhealthy and useless products on regular tv. You readers who share my view may want to do what I do. I cover the slot on back of the cassette and erase the hype so the next time I watch the tape I won't have to look at that shit. Remember to remove the transparent tape after erasure to avoid accidentally recording over the movie.

Counted the ads in comic books lately? Ask yourself why the cover price is so high when half the magazine consists of ads you'd rather not see.

CEREBUS 177 continues Dave Sim's **MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS** series and previews Nina Paley's book. If you don't see **CEREBUS** locally, write to Aardvark-Vanahelm, POB 1674, Sta C., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2.

Joe Bob Briggs defends **BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD** in the December 27, 1993 issue of **THE JOE BOB REPORT**. He also takes on Janet Reno over the Violence on TV hoopla. I fluctuate on this issue. The most violence I saw on tv last year was cops beating up people on the streets of Berkeley and San Francisco, but what do I know? I always laugh at stuff like **TERMINATOR** and **ROBOCOP** movies the way I laughed at Bugs Bunny cartoons. I guess I got desensitized to the whole movie trip when I worked on a couple of movies way back. I remember watching this guy add some red vegetable coloring to a jar of karo syrup to make a supply of blood for this Vampire movie. Now when I see all that blood on screen, I just start thinking about having pancakes for breakfast. Send \$3 to Joe Bob and check out the **REPORT**. **POB 2002, Dallas, Tx 75221**.

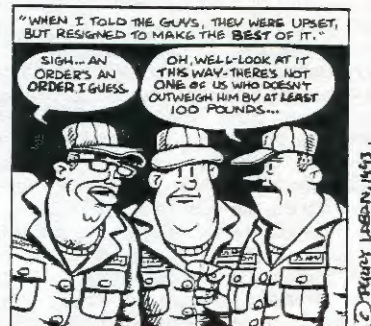


Zack Mosley died of a heart attack at Martin Memorial Medical Center in Stuart Florida, Tuesday, December 21, 1993. He was 87. Zack created one of my favorite comic strips, **SMILIN' JACK**. His biography is called **BRAVE COWARD ZACK**.

PRO/con 2 and WONDER CON

If you're a pro and you're interested in **PRO/con**, write and ask for details of this year's gathering at the Parc Oakland Hotel, April 20 & 21. **PRO/con 1** was successful last year, so it is happening again this year. **WONDER CON** is set for April 22-24. Details from Bryan Unlenbrock, 2991 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 202, Berkeley, California 94705. [510] 644-1886. Fax [510] 644-1678.

To get in on all the local San Francisco gossip, check out an issue of **FILTH**. **POB 426712, SF, CA 94103**. Send a couple of bucks. Ask for #11, the conspiracy issue. Lots of great stuff about all the assassinations and plots and counterplots.



Terry Laban's **CUD 5** is on sale. More of the life and times of the big guy





1994 AND ALL THAT

1994. There is a cluster of scarified pierce punks sitting on the sidewalk in front of the window of the Intermezzo coffee house on Telegraph Avenue talking about the history of tattoo. Shaved heads, ear and nose rings, studded tongues; ah, it's a mutilated world out there. Did I ever expect to see the day when there would be a piercing salon on the Avenue doing more business than some of the bookstores? The lot across the street where the Berkeley Inn stood from 1911-1991 is still empty but someone is buying the property for development. That translates into more yuppie stores. More places to buy things. Just what we need around here, more product outlets to glom the student parental dollar. Tuition rates have been going up and up and up at UC. Got to get rid of those poor people at the bottom and make room for the kids of the new rich. New laws against sitting on the streets and begging in the works. Got to get these homeless people out of sight. Wanna buy some used CD's cheap? Amoeba and Rasputin's will sell them to you. Need a slice of gummy hot pizza? Blondie's and LaVal's and Kip's will sell it to you. Ah, yes, the Chinese family that now owns Kip's has a pizza oven, but you can still get a burger and fries for less than four bucks. When I was a student at Cal back in 1963, I paid 37¢ and I could rent a room at the Carleton for a buck.

There aren't any dormitories on People's Park yet, but UC is still trying. Local artists have painted every inch of the new bathrooms and the graffiti inform the new students about social issues that are still alive in the negative nineties, the age of anarchy. I haven't seen any naked people this week, but it's been cold and rainy, a typical Bay Area winter, and naked activism is a fair weather enterprise. I don't expect the X-Plicit Players or the Topless Brigade to pass today. Actually, I don't drink my tea at the Intermezzo these days. The place is always full, for one thing, and I don't like the view for another. These bald-headed chopped up teenagers in their threadbare jeans and second-hand leather are not my idea of a pleasant view.

"Why are there no earthquakes on Telegraph Avenue?"

"Because there's a wingnut holding down every corner."

I hear this joke told by a street merchant to a cop standing by his bicycle outside Rasputin's new glass CD palace. It's all CD's in Berkeley now. Vinyl is dead, though you can still find records here and there. My friend collects the older funkier ones the way Crumb collects the 78s from the 1920's. Crumb lives in Paris now with his wife, Aline, and his daughter, Sophie. You can still find some of his books on a counter at the rear of Comics and Comics, but most of them are too expensive to buy. I see people reading them. No one plays much attention to the sign that tells them to limit their reading time to twenty minutes. I don't know anyone at C & C anymore. The people I used to know have moved behind the scenes, moved up in the hierarchy. The clerks are all strangers to me. People who keep up with underground comix go elsewhere, mostly to Comic Relief on University Avenue, because they still keep a stash of the back issues. C & C has the impersonal feel of a mall chainstore. I can't relate to most of the new comics anyway, though I do collect some of them like *Shade* and *Shadowman*. I usually read at *THE COMICS JOURNAL* and get irritated because there are so many errors that go uncorrected. I read this interview with Bill Griffith sometime ago and Bill was talking about *COMIX BOOK* being an imitation of *ARCADE*. *COMIX BOOK* not only came out in 1974, the year before *ARCADE*, but it had artwork by Art Spiegelman, Bill's co-editor on *ARCADE*. The problem with those *TCJ* interviews is the errors are passed along as history. I know Gary Groth just prints the interviews as they happened, but as someone who has a long history of discussing comic books and comic art with artists I know I have to verify what they tell me before printing it as fact. I've only known a couple of cartoonists I would trust as historians, the others know about their own particular interests and can't be trusted when they comment about comic art history. I feel it is the publisher's responsibility to check the facts in an interview or have someone else check them. Why? Because if there is one error, perhaps there are others, and if there are, the researcher cannot trust the publication.

Someone asked me how I felt about some of the "alternative" comics like *YUMMY FUR*, *HATE*, *PEEPSHOW*, *EIGHTBALL*, *DIRTY PLOTTE*, & *SLUTBURGER*, well, first of all, I call these underground comix, since I still consider "alternative" comics to be those that copped out to the censors back in the seventies and titles like *HATE* have stayed on the mark. I've read all of them and enjoyed them over the years. If I don't mention all of them, it's because I have to buy them these days and it goes against the grain for me to give free advertising to people who don't comp me their funnybooks. Doesn't mean I don't keep up with these comics and enjoy the stories in them, just means I have one attitude about putting out this newsletter and another about stuff I enjoy that I have to pay for. The comics mentioned get enough coverage elsewhere. I try to focus more on people who lack access to more widely distributed zines.

I finally got around to reading all those articles in the first seven issues of *BLAB!* and I realized that most, maybe all, cartoonists have a very distorted view of what they are doing and who they are doing it for. They talk of reaching an audience that normally does not read comic books, in other words, an audience other than their own stereotyped notion of who the reader is--well, the only cartoonists who reach that audience are doing editorial cartoons or syndicated strips and single panels, because comic books are read by a specific audience and people outside that audience ignore them. Robert Crumb became famous because his *Head Comix* were distributed all over the world in underground newspapers like *The East Village Other* and his cartooning style was known to millions of people before he got together with Don Donahue and published the first *ZAP* in February of 1968. Jaxon got underground comix into the head shops through contacts he made when he was art director for the Family Dog. Don Schenker did the same thing when he was printing rock posters and postcards, got the shops to take some comic books at the same time. Underground newspapers reached a young audience for about a decade [1964-76] and during that time underground comix had an advertising medium. Some of the artists, like Rick Griffin, Victor Moscoso,

and Greg Irons did posters and comic books and had the advantage of cross-promotion. People who saw Rick Griffin's **Tales of the Tube** in **Surfer** in 1972 and realized the same artist was doing rock posters for the Fillmore and album covers for the Grateful Dead were likely to take an interest when they found out he was doing stories for **ZAP**. Some of the publishers are now saying that underground comics peaked and began to decline when the head shop distribution fell through after a Supreme Court Decision in late 1972, but by then the Comic Store Movement was spreading around the country and if the comix had had the staying power they could have sold as well or even better through the comic stores. When the Viet Nam war came to an end, the major cause of the politically oriented underground papers ended with it and most of the papers became local ad sheets or died a quick death. The survivors became sex papers. In Berkeley, the **BARB** had split into two sections before it's demise, the front half remaining political while the second half became **THE SPECTATOR**, a sheet filled with ads for hookers, nude beaches, relationships, and phone sex. The **BARB** died and **THE SPECTATOR** survived. It's still in the coin boxes around the Bay Area. Still battling with local parents from time to time because their kids have access to anything in street coin boxes.

Abbie Hoffman blamed Jann Wenner and **ROLLING STONE** for the demise of underground papers. He called Wenner the Benedict Arnold of the movement for starting the rock paper and taking all the rock ads away from the other papers. Wenner promised the same hip audience without the radical politics and the record companies went with him. I just reread **SOON TO BE A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE**, Abbie Hoffman's autobiography and guess what--he didn't even mention underground comix! I'm sure he saw and read them, but radical politics were always above talking about such things as comic strips. Oh, they made use of them--see the issue of **RADICAL AMERIKA** done by Gilbert Shelton and others, but in the biographies, the comix play no part. See Tom Hayden's **REUNION** and Jerry Rubin's **WE ARE EVERYWHERE**. Even in Charles Perry's minute by minute analysis of what happened in **HAIGHT ASHBURY** ignores the comix. No mention of Crumb and his wife selling **ZAPS** out of the baby carriage. It's my argument that people inside the comix community take them seriously and see them as an influential force in their lives, but people outside that eclectic group take them for granted or ignore them.

When people no longer saw underground comix in the weekly tabloids, they thought they were gone. The average person would be surprised to know there were 12 issues of **ZAP**. "Hey, I thought that stuff went out in the sixties with free acid and hippies and love beads." Jacob Brackman wrote the comix off as a sixties fad in **PLAYBOY** in 1969 when there were only five or six **ZAPS**. Underground comix didn't stop. The people who did them went on doing them. And when they stopped, others continued to do them. Peter Bagge is doing a lot of the same things in his autobiographical stories in **NEAT STUFF** and **HATE** that Crumb did in **ZAP**. I'm sure Bagge was able to succeed Crumb at **WEIRDO** because there was an affinity between the two cartoonists. Think Dan Clowes wasn't

effected by the pop existentialism of Crumb?

But, hey, fuck those people who don't read comic books. I doubt that any cartoonist really draws for those people. What the hell for? They have what they want, so why bother them? And I don't see Art Spiegelman as having made any kind of a breakthrough at all with a hardback book version of **MAUS**. I liked his early comic book stuff a lot more than that concentration camp story that went on and on. Art should have been given a prize for **ACE HOLE** because that was a tour de force.

There is a well developed and established comics community now and it includes people who read and love comic books. They keep the stores going, they keep over fifty companies in business, and they are willing to pony up the bucks to go to a cycle of conventions every year so they can hang out and party together. For a cartoonist to say he wants to reach an audience other than the one that normally reads comics is like him saying he wishes his mom would read and appreciate his books. It's a nice fantasy, but unlikely to happen. It's also insulting to the comics community which is where he gets his ego-boo and his income. Gary Groth told Peter Bagge the same thing in the first issue of **I LIKE COMICS**. Go for that reader who does not ordinarily read comics. So call it **THE POPULAR CULTURE JOURNAL** or **THAT OTHER READER JOURNAL**. But if it is about comic books, it belongs inside the comics community. That's a battle that can't be won, Gary. The people who sneer at comic art have clouded minds. The Shadow has wiped them out for good. They are missing a fantasy world the rest of us have access to, and we feel superior to them because we know it and they do not. My feeling is why bother them?

Crumb said his father never looked at his comics. There's the crux. Comics expand the child world into adulthood. If adults could see it, get into it, a kid would have no place to hide, no place to develop a self. My mother never looked at my comic book stash. She never knew or cared whether I was reading about Little Lulu or the Blonde Phantom. I liked it that way and now that I write about comics I know I am writing to others who have had the same experience I have, not to their parents.

Truth is that kind of talk has nothing to do with comic books. It has to do with money. Hey, if people who didn't read comic books started reading them, there would be a lot more money coming in!

Talk about changing times. I passed a Walden bookstore this afternoon and there in the window on a revolving comic rack was the latest reprint of **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** right next to the latest issue of **THE FLINTSTONES**. This may not mean anything to the young reader, but to those of us who lived through the years of EC comics and saw them disappear from the drugstore rack in the wake of the Wertham crusade and the coming of the Comics Code Authority, seeing the Crypt Keeper meet Fred Flintstone in a junk book outlet was a flash. The horror stories are so tame compared to the filmed versions of them on cable that no one blinks an eye. I suspect Walden would sell **ZAPS** if they could bandage up a panel here and there.

Ron Turner sent me an invitation to his Christmas party. **Last Gasp** has moved to 777 Florida Street in San

Francisco [94110] so jot that down. You can still get Ron's catalog for a couple of bucks and it's a good listing of underground comix and other items. Ron has stuff like **YOUNG LUST 8** and John Howard's **HORNY BIKER SLUTS 6**. He just put out an anthology of Spain's **BIG BITCH** art. Spain started the biker trend in underground comics back in his **ZODIAC MINDWARP**. Meant to be a comic book, it was published as a tabloid back in 1967. Spain rode with a group known as the Road Vultures and he told a number of stories about them. His character Trashman evolved out of the gang and starred in a couple of issues of **SUBVERT**. The Big Bitch stuff will remind you all of the Women's Lib wars of the early seventies. Trina did **ALL GIRL THRILLS** for The Print Mint and right on the heels of this one came Spain with **MEAN BITCH THRILLS**. Femacho fought against macho. Crumb took on the Sisterhood in **BLACK AND WHITE** in 1973. That story was reprinted by Jeff Rund in his collection of Crumb called **CARLOAD O' COMICS** and is now in print in a recent volume of **THE COMPLETE CRUMB**. Spain, like Jaxon, after his underground period, drifted into historical research and did some interesting work for **ARCADE** and **WEIRDO**. Be nice to see a complete collection of Spain's work in one of those coffee table books.

Denis Kitchen sent his latest catalog or to be more accurate a mailing service included me on an old list. I can always tell. **Kitchen Sink** has moved to 320 Riverside Drive, Northampton, MA 01060. Jot that down, too. Kitchen says in the editorial that he has acquired Tundra. I've heard a lot of mumbling and grumbling about this merger, but I will leave it to **TCJ** to print all that stuff. I suspect Kevin Eastman got tired of arguing with artists and distributors; after all, you get into comics because you like to draw and if you are successful you wind up a businessman who has little time to draw. Crumb handled it pretty well. When Don Schenker tried to suck him into the business during the early years of The Print Mint, Crumb danced aside and left the business end to others. Instead of contracting all of his work to one company, he deliberately spread it around to half a dozen companies. Well, he got burned quite often and did not make the money he might have made, but he had his time to himself and it's likely he has drawn more individual comic books than any other cartoonist alive or dead. Crumb is prolific, the Isaac Asimov of the comics.

I have some data available on disc. I use a Macintosh SE20 and am using Microsoft Word 4. If you have compatible Mac equipment or access to a file translator, you may want a copy of some of my stuff. I sell my listing of cartoonists for \$10/\$2 post. If you're doing research, get in touch.

Clay Geerdes **COMIX WAVE 146**
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